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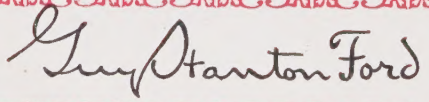

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Some Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Their Villages

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

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Some Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Their Villages

BY

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PREFACE

THIS STUDY of cotton mill workers and their villages, including preliminary inquiries and historical readings, has extended over several years. The actual research which forms the basis of this volume includes personal first-hand study of 500 families, comprising 2,362 individuals over six years of age, selected from four types of North Carolina mill villages. The entire study was made personally by the author, a native and, for twenty-five years, a resident of Gaston County, and was completed under the direction of the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina, during the years 1926-27. Since it was brought to a close before the development of labor troubles in Gastonia in 1929, it fortunately provides data gathered from an undisturbed setting. The volume purports to be no more than a single concrete study combining samplings of mill village population with case examples of individuals and families. Its essential picture will be found in simple figures rather than in literary description.

I especially wish to express my indebtedness to Dr. Howard W. Odum for his guidance, encouragement, and helpful suggestions in the preparation of the manuscript; to Dr. Jesse F. Steiner for his careful reading of the entire manuscript and constructive criticisms; to Dr. Katharine Jocher, assistant director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, for her help with the schedules, effective suggestions, and for reading the manuscript; to Miss Harriet L. Herring and Dr. Rupert B. Vance, both of the Institute for Research in Social Science, for reading the manuscript and for valuable criticisms. In particular, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my wife, Clyde Russell Rhyne, for her sympathetic interest and help with the final revision of the manuscript.

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Finally, I wish to express my appreciation of the coöperation and invaluable help received from mill superintendents, county officials, and all others who have contributed toward making the study possible.

JENNINGS J. RHYNE

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CHAPTER I

GASTON COUNTY: AN AMERICAN SCENE

Here is a southern county classified as essentially rural and yet comprising within its borders 99 separate cotton mills, located in cotton mill villages of various sorts. In it are approximately one-fifth of all the spindles in North Carolina. It is also in the heart of the textile area. The county and its mills, the villages and their people, have held the center of various stages of development in the textile industry in the Piedmont South within the last quarter century. And during the current year of 1929, Gaston County has held an unenviable place in local and national publicity.

What are the essential facts, the concrete pictures which the seeker after truth will find upon actual observation, well planned, conscientiously carried on, and sympathetically interpreted? What are the outward appearances, the inner processes? What are the descriptive portraitures upon which reliable conclusions may be based? First-hand information is the only reliable evidence, and such evidence can be had only by actual observation, exhaustive study, and scientific analysis. It is the purpose of this study to present some of the facts involved in one fundamental aspect of the subject, namely, the story of the mill worker and his village in Gaston County, North Carolina.

THE SITUATION

During the decade immediately following the Great War, the textile industry in the South was passing through a crisis. For the first time it suffered from a prolonged period of depression from which recovery was spasmodic, local, and short-lived. Partly as a result of this general economic situation,

it has faced in a relatively short period two of the most widespread and vigorous exhibitions of discontent among its workers, one at the beginning of the decade and another before its end. Capital felt more than usually justified in guarding zealously its prerogatives in its attempt to maintain the status quo. Labor seemed restless and in search for better conditions. Eagerness for change which had long been expressing itself in individual action by excessive turnover was now beginning to be expressed by group action and in audible demands and protests. Gastonia was the center of the storm. Invectives of one sort were accompanied by retaliation and threats of another, while bitterness and hatred natural in such a contest were there aggravated by the introduction of issues which appealed to social, racial, and religious prejudices. The contest both in Gastonia and other centers was taking more concrete form in strikes, murders, the calling out of troops, court trials, and personal antagonisms. Unreasonable propaganda from outside was being matched with local extremes, and the whole situation was one for particularly careful and scientific study.

Whence these upheavals and what significance for future relations in this formerly peaceful industrial area were as yet not clearly discernible. Though an unhappy chapter in the history of the textile industry, increasing unrest might well be viewed as a forerunner of the ultimate readjustment between capital and labor and a means to a greater coöperation and understanding between them. But would the South profit? The southern situation was peculiarly regional but was also part of a general unrest. The South was fine reaping ground for many leaders and reformers whose efforts might have failed elsewhere. All over the country the brooding discontent in this area was engaging an unusual amount of popular attention. Yet southern labor, itself restless enough and tense with stirrings, was in no sense union-minded nor wise in the ways of organization. Misunderstandings multiplied, now and then an unprincipled overlord stepped beyond his bounds and

made unbearable situations. Into this area came new types of leaders, and the Gaston scene was the product.

Emerging from this situation were certain recurring questions. Was the cotton mill worker rebelling because of his natural dissatisfaction or was his unrest stimulated largely from without? From whatever source, was he justified in rebelling at the industrial program? Was he being exploited by the employer? Did he have unduly long hours and low wages? Should he be permitted to join a union? Was he being coerced either to join or not to join? Was the present unrest an indication that the mill worker, a former tenant farmer, attracted to the mill because of the weekly pay envelope and increased earning capacity, was becoming disillusioned, seething with discontent at long hours and low wages with little chance of bettering his condition? Could the South profit by experience? Were cotton manufacturers limited in their outlook for the welfare of mill workers? Were their fulminations against liberals and progressives, alongside the communists and extremes, sincere? Did they try to face the situation frankly? Were they opposed to more than a grammar school education for children of cotton mill families lest they be lost as future mill workers? What was the real situation with regard to the occupations entered by mill children after they leave school? Did the mill village tend to promote a social type? What about housing conditions? Were the paternalistic practices of the mill owners hampering individual initiative and the development of personality? What of the cotton mill worker turned radical? Could they see the extremes to which the native workers, lovers of liberty, would turn if once they believed they were being oppressed? In fine what was the actual situation?

SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This book cannot answer all these questions; indeed, the information upon which to base the answers to many of them does not yet exist. At best the study of the cotton mill situa-

tion in the South is a difficult one and involves scores of concrete studies as well as careful inquiry into the general economic and social backgrounds. Comparative studies of New England mills and southern mills are being made and will provide important data. Nevertheless, beginnings must be made in the presentation of facts dealing with actual living conditions and social backgrounds of workers in representative villages. This volume is such a beginning and represents a careful and detailed study of 500 North Carolina cotton mill families,—2,362 individuals over six years of age, from whom data were secured by personal interviews. Inquiries included factors of social, economic, educational, religious, and political nature; and all interviews were made personally by the author who was reared in the textile section of the State, and in addition, had taught a number of years in Gaston County. A schedule was filled out for each family consisting of data relative to the parents of the father and mother; the former home of the family; various facts concerning the house in which the family was at present living, such as ownership, date of erection, number of rooms, number of beds, modern improvements, etc.; data with regard to members of the household as to date of birth, occupation, wages, education, church membership, amusements, lodges, clubs, etc.; and facts with regard to voting, occupational mobility, and general attitude toward education, child labor, and labor organization.

THE METHOD USED

The method of the study was inductive. Villages representative of different types were selected, and every effort was made to see that samplings were fair and adequate. This study, therefore, is a unit in a larger study of the textile situation in the South. In view of the fact that heretofore no study has been made of the individual worker in the cotton mill and in view of the fact that there is need for exact information and quantitative statements and measurements of social conditions existing among the workers themselves, every

effort has been made to select an adequate and representative sample. Since, as will be demonstrated later, the group in question is a homogeneous one, both as to race and cultural backgrounds, it was believed that a group of 500 families would prove adequate, provided the test for representativeness was met. In order to make the group as representative as possible families were selected not from one type of mill village in one community, but from different mill villages with different forms of organization. Furthermore, only families whose chief breadwinner did a grade of work below that of the overseer were chosen because the effort was being made to study what might be called the rank and file of cotton mill families.

TYPE-CLASSIFICATION OF MILL VILLAGES

It must be evident, of course, that there are major and minor differences among cotton mill villages. Some mill villages, for example, have a well developed system of industrial welfare work while others do not. Furthermore, some mill villages are located in isolated, rural localities, while others form a part of a town or city. These differences are still further accentuated by differences in the nature of the local governments and by the attitudes of the employers in general toward the labor force. Apparently, therefore, the differences among mill villages may be sufficient to attract families of different social levels. In order to eliminate, as far as possible, the danger of unfair sampling of the population, a classification of mill villages was made before the survey was begun. A proportionate number of the families surveyed was then taken from each type of village. The chief points on which the classification of villages was made were location, size, form of government, and tendencies toward paternalism. On this basis there seemed to be four distinct types of cotton mill villages: the *cotton mill town,* the *company or unincorporated mill town,* the *suburban mill village,* and the *rural mill village.* After all available sources of information on the 500 families had been exhausted, materials gathered

and analyzed, the next task was to present a composite picture of this social stratum of the population. This constitutes a picture gleaned from facts, figures, and statements by various individuals in the group, and from careful analysis of all facts interpreted as accurately as possible in scientific perspective. The following pages attempt to present this picture.

CHAPTER II

THE WORKER AND HIS VILLAGE

The observer approaches what appears in the distance to be a town of considerable size when suddenly around a bend in the road or over the hill he comes upon compact rows of small houses of more or less similar architectural design. They run in rows on either side of a street, then branch out into side ways on hill or level. He is impressed already with the large brick structure that seems to stand in the center of things. Standing beside the structure at an elevation of perhaps 100 to 150 feet is a circular steel tank painted black on which is written "Southern Cotton Mills." He is interested further in the number of houses he sees in this village and concludes that there are probably about 300. Continuing, he discovers other characteristics common to many of the North Carolina cotton mill villages.

THE MILL VILLAGE

In one village the owner has taken a great deal of pride in the beautification of his village: the presence of flowers, shade trees, and hedges cannot but be impressive to a stranger. The houses, though arranged in uniform rows along each street, are designed according to several patterns. No two adjoining houses are alike, and all are painted. To add to the differentiation in these rows of houses no two adjoining houses are painted alike. The visitor is favorably impressed by the grass-covered lawns and the gay flower beds, all of which are probably enclosed by a hedge kept in perfect trim. On inquiry he finds that the mill corporation has made all the improvements on the lawns and employs its own force to keep

the lawns and hedges in good condition. Pursuing his observations, he is impressed by the extensiveness of the paved streets which the company has put down at its own expense in this particular village. The several churches are rather imposing in size and design, and the visitor wonders if cotton mill people can build and support churches like these. On inquiry, however, he finds that the corporation has built each of the churches and pays part of the running expenses of the church and the salary of the preacher. Likewise the school building compares favorably with the best that is being built in a state newly alive to education. Here again it is found that the corporation has been instrumental in building and equipping a school plant and in "hiring and firing" the teachers.

In another village the mill owner has not been so much interested, and there is a general impression of bleakness and barrenness of the homes and surroundings of the people who work in the big red brick building. Here again, as in the first instance, the houses are arrayed in rows. The similarity to the first village ends here, however, for these houses are as much alike as are the box cars standing on the railway side tracks filled with materials for the mills. There are more three-roomed houses in this village and almost none with five rooms. The little box-like four-roomed houses are topped with pyramid shaped roofs. All are painted white; all are in the same stage of cleanness or dinginess. There are no grass, trees, or shrubbery on the lawns. The sun beats down on the barren soil and the straggling weeds. The whole village looks baked on a hot summer afternoon. The back yard and quite frequently the front yard may be cluttered with tin cans, discarded Ford tires, papers, and old rags. A few broken-down chairs are on the porch. The wooden steps are rotting and threaten to collapse with the weight of the person mounting them. The streets and sidewalks not only are not paved but are almost impassable from the effects of washing rains. The visitor concludes that there is not much here to attract and

retain an energetic and happy lot of people.

Situated near the mill, generally in the most frequented section of the village, is discovered the little business area of the community. Here the visitor inevitably finds a cold drink stand, the chief recourse of the cotton mill worker seeking to quench his thirst. Run in connection with the cold drink establishment is the small grocery store managed by some enterprising man who is likely to feel himself a little better than the folks to whom he sells his wares, because he is generally not of a cotton mill family himself. If the mill is of considerable size or if it is located away from a town there is likely to be also a small general merchandise store which carries a rather cheap line of goods for the accommodation of the workers. Standing near the mill itself is a neat little brick structure where the business offices are located.

THE COTTON MILL WORKER'S DAY

There is a small local hotel in which the traveller may register, or he may stay at a boarding house. Here he begins his observations and life with the mill folk themselves. At 5:00 o'clock in the morning he is awakened by the noise of a single whistle. In a moment another joins the first one, then another, and another. Some are west, some east, some north, and some south, but all have the same long blast. The first reflection of the stranger is: What time of day or night is this? Do I have to get up now? To the mill worker, however, it is a matter of fact that this is the whistle that calls the 25-odd-thousand Gaston County cotton mill workers from their slumbers and dreams back to their day's work. Day in and day out for six days in the week, Sunday alone excepted, they respond to this blast of the mill whistle. It is as if the religious rules and hours of the old New England children's homes were in force again!

The mill worker's wife dresses hurriedly, kindles the fire in a little wood or oil stove, and hastily prepares breakfast. The mill worker, meanwhile, and his children are making

themselves ready for the more than daily dozen. Sometimes the mother goes too. At five-thirty there is a second warning of the mill whistle, this time telling the worker that in 25 minutes he must be at his spinning frame or loom. By this time he is eating his breakfast. Fifteen minutes later, or a quarter to six, another warning is sounded, three short blasts of the whistle, which means that ten minutes more remain and the worker must be on his way.

If it is summer, the morning is light and one sees men and women, girls and boys, coming hurriedly from every direction. In the adjacent countryside the mill workers' kinsfolk on the farms start for the fields. If it is winter the workers are heeding the call of the mill whistle though the visitor cannot see them because of the darkness of the early morning, unless by the aid of a street lamp. Five hundred, one thousand, two thousand five hundred strong they come. These people of ages from 14 to 50, of farm and mountain heritage for the most part, come teeming in to their new found work. The men come clad in overalls, or a three-dollar pair of trousers and a coat which does not match. The women and girls clad in dresses of gingham or of similar material, the older ones sometimes with the cotton lint from the previous day's work still clinging to their hair, hurry to the spinning or spooling department, or to the weave shop.

Promptly at 5:55 o'clock the fourth and last blast of the whistle is sounded, the machinery starts, and the day's work begins. The windows of the mill are open and one can hear a block away the hum and buzz of the machinery. The older type of machinery is driven by belts from overhead shafting. The flying black leather bands extending from each machine to the ceiling make the older mills darker and the work rooms more filled up than the newer mills. The latter have individual electric motor drives for each machine, leaving the room open and clear. To a newcomer the noise is likely to be deafening. On better acquaintance, however, he learns to converse rather freely in spite of the hum of the spinning room

or even the clatter of the looms. As the visitor ventures inside the mill he sees the workers in their accustomed places, some tending the loom where the yarn is being woven into cloth, some in the slasher room where the warps are starched and dried on huge steam-filled copper drums. The doffer boy, 14 years old, sits beside the spinning frame on a bobbin or waste box or lounges on the floor beside a window waiting for the bobbins to fill with the yarn, when he passes down the side of the frame, snatching the full bobbins from their spindles and replacing them with empty quills, his hands fairly flying so that the eye can scarcely follow their movements. Sometimes the passer-by along the street, especially in the summer, sees eight or ten of these boys outside the mill lying under the shade of the trees telling jokes and smoking cigarettes. They are prone to yell at the passer-by. If a youngster goes by they are likely to challenge him for a fight, or if a farmer boy, they will dub him a "hay-seed" or a "clod-hopper." If a girl, they will merely whistle to attract her attention. When the foreman appears at the door of the mill and utters his usual whistle, which means that their rest period is over, they hustle again to get on the job.

The woman worker who attends the spinning frame looks sharply up and down her long machines for tufts of white on the waste rollers which warn her that a thread has broken. She pieces it up, sets in a new bobbin of roving here and there, and passes on with her waste brush or picks the little rollers free of greasy lint, for the cleaner she keeps her machines the better the work runs. When she catches up with her work she may sit in the window and rest. The older women snatch this opportunity to engage in the traditional habit of dipping snuff from the tin snuff box with a little black gum wood brush secured from the near-by woods.

For six hours, from 6 until 12 o'clock, the special processes and activities for each group are repeated over and over again. At 12 o'clock the whistle sounds and the machinery stops for the 55-minute "dinner-time." Then the human stream retraces

its course, pouring out of doors and scurrying in many directions, taking little care to select streets or sidewalks but passing between buildings and taking the most direct route to their several homes. From 11 until 12 o'clock the mill worker's wife or his daughter has been busy preparing the dinner of meats, canned foods, and occasionally fresh vegetables, so that promptly at 12 "dinner" is ready and on the table in the kitchen. After hurriedly washing his hands, perhaps occasionally bothering to comb his hair, the mill worker sits down to his noon-day meal which he finishes with as much dispatch as does the college boy on his commons—perhaps fifteen minutes. Then by 12:30 o'clock he is ready to start back to "the mill." At 12:30 a second whistle blows, repeated sometimes at 12:45, to warn the worker that either in 25 or in 10 minutes he must be on the job again. If he gets to the mill a few minutes ahead of time he goes to the inevitable cold drink stand and drinks his coca-cola, though he often partakes of this refreshment in the middle of morning or afternoon working periods. A stand in the mill may supply him, though in most mills he is free to go out to a shop across the street. Then some crowd around the door or entrance to the mill waiting for the machinery to start up, though many go on in to their places as soon as they arrive. When the final blast of the whistle is given at 12:55 the same process of the morning is begun all over again and lasts until six o'clock in the afternoon.

At six o'clock after an 11-hour day the mill worker returns home. Supper is ready soon after he arrives. In many households it is customary for it to be on the table when he comes in, just as dinner was. The meal consists of essentially the same foods of which he has partaken at his noon-day meal.

LEISURE HOURS OF THE MILL WORKER

Now comes his opportunity for recreation. What does the cotton mill worker do for recreation? If he is inclined to want to talk he may "go uptown," sit on a goods box with

others who have a like inclination and talk about the happenings in the mill that day, or the hardships of his job, criticize the local town government, lambast Al Smith or criticize Mr. Hoover, or give his views as to what he thinks Congress ought to do about labor. Or perhaps he is talking about joining the union. If he has an automobile, he may go for a little ride and in this way tend to relieve the fatigue of the day's work. If he is inclined to be extremely industrious he may spend an hour hoeing the little garden patch which the mill has provided for him in the back yard. If of some age, he will likely sit down and rest in silence, perhaps talk with other members of his family. If he is inclined to seek recreation, he may find diversion in the "picture show." On Tuesday and Thursday evenings he attends his lodge. The cotton mill worker retires early because he must arise early. This ends his daily round of living which is repeated with the same regularity from day to day. If he is of the younger group of workers, he is much less likely to be content to spend his hours away from the mill in the same manner as the man with a family. He is then more likely to spend his evenings in the local pool room, if the town allows one, or sitting on one of the few vacant chairs in the barber shop discussing Babe Ruth's latest home run or some feat a local hero has accomplished.

Eleven o'clock Saturday ends the 60-hour week of the North Carolina cotton mill worker. He has worked for eleven hours a day for five days and five hours on Saturday. He has now stopped for his week-end rest. How does he spend it? He has little orderly program. He reads little. The sensational type of newspaper is most likely to attract his attention. The current opinion magazine he almost never reads; the conservative daily, rarely. He may find an unusual appeal in the cheap love story magazines. A library he has not. Perhaps the only books in the house are the family Bible and the few books the children from the fifth grade down have been required to purchase in connection with their school

work. Again the worker who likes the town gossip may eventually be seen loitering around the usual "hang-out" places. Some may be engaged in games that have a considerable element of risk involved. If there is a carnival or circus in town the mill village turns out in a body with the exception of the few old folks who think that such things are "born of the devil." In the spring or summer months the mill may have its baseball team, or if there is not a regularly organized team, the mill men and boys may "pick up" sides and play on Saturday afternoon. Or if he is fond of fishing he may get in his car or his neighbor's and go to the nearest fishing place. In winter we may find him hunting. If the mill company has a swimming pool, we will find a large element of the mill population present there Saturday afternoon and Sunday, provided the preachers in town have not been successful in closing the swimming pools on Sunday. If the mill runs the pool as a part of its welfare work, public opinion in the village is usually strong enough to require separate hours for boys and girls. If it is a commercial pool, its owner generally braves public censure for the sake of more continuous patronage. The joys of the "old swimming hole" also should not be overlooked as a form of recreation for the boys. For like his farmer cousin the younger mill worker finds the appeal of running water in near-by creeks irresistible and he betakes himself thither in large numbers especially on Sunday afternoons.

HOW HE SPENDS SUNDAY

Occasionally we may find the mill worker and his family journeying out to the farm for the week-end to the "old home place" where perhaps a married brother or sister or "the old folks" still live, or he may take longer trips in his Ford. If he stays in the village for the week-end, Sunday may find him at the church, for the southern cotton mill worker is religious; and he connects himself with his church and takes his religion rather seriously. Sunday is a real rest day for the average cotton mill worker. For once he can break his

routine of early rising, and generally he takes advantage of it. Very likely he will not rise before the day is well under way. For once he is a man of leisure. After a light breakfast, he lounges around the house until time to go to Sunday school. If he is not religiously inclined and does not attend Sunday school, he may spend the entire morning in this manner or go to the regular Sunday "hang-out" place where he finds plenty of his fellow workers. On Sunday afternoon he and his fellow-workers may gather beside the highway and "watch the rest of the world go by."

If he prefers to take part in church activities and has a flair for talking on religious subjects he may teach a Sunday school class or even in rare instances be superintendent of a small Sunday school. Here, as in other churches, the demand for "workers" is greater than the supply, so that willingness rather than education, ability as a teacher, or exemplary conduct is the chief qualification. The mothers and daughters especially are keenly interested in religious activities and usually attend Sunday school and church with remarkable regularity. This characteristic, however, does not hold true for the drifting cotton mill family but only for the settled stable element of cotton mill workers, especially those who own their homes. For this group it is also observed that they are rather careful of their dress. In fact, after the Saturday afternoon shave and haircut and bath in the barber shop and a shoe shine at the same place, and after donning his best suit and straw hat, the young man presents a very different appearance from that of the everyday worker. The young girl also looks upon Saturday afternoon and Sunday as the one period during the week in which to "dress up." The girls generally spend heavily of their meager earnings for cosmetics as any casual observer may conclude. For Sunday wearing apparel they are very careful as a rule to select moderately expensive but generally rather flashy patterns.

When a holiday is declared by the mill or when the mill goes on the four-day week basis in the summer, the mill vil-

lage population may be scattered indiscriminately throughout the neighborhood and surrounding country. The women and girls and a few of the younger boys may be observed picking blackberries on the surrounding creek banks or wherever there happens to be a "blackberry patch" on some neighboring farm. This privilege they assume as a matter of course much to the farmer's disgust. The men may spend the day fishing or perhaps hunting if it is winter. Rarely is a community picnic indulged in unless sponsored by the mill or some outside agency.

THE COTTON MILL WORKER'S HOME

The mill worker's wife, if she does not work in the mill herself, from the time she begins the day at 5:00 in the morning with the preparation of the morning meal, is engrossed in a daily round of routine work, the sphere of which comprises the company house and the near-by grocery store. Before the day of most housekeepers has begun she has the breakfast over, and the dishes washed and the house in order —often by 6:30 or 7 o'clock. From then until the middle of the morning she washes, or irons, or sews, or snatches a few minutes for gossip with a neighbor down at the back end of her yard where in a less made-to-order village there would be a fence. When it comes time to think about dinner she makes a trip to the village grocery store for her supplies. She is an expert at menus that include fried foods and large baking powder biscuits and a little round of quickly prepared dishes.

Let us take a glimpse at this house in which the woman is working. Most often it will be a four-room house plainly constructed of inexpensive material and owned by the company. It has received a rather generous coating of paint of a white or brown color, but is likely to vary in color or trimmings from the houses on either side. If the mill company has gone to the expense of providing the worker with a lawn and hedge, the surroundings of his home may be rather attractive. If the company has not taken this step the chances are that

the lawn will be barren of flowers, trees, or grass. The porch is plainly constructed with ordinary two-by-four supports to serve as columns. If there are four rooms in the house one may be used, provided the family does not number over six, for the "company room." This room is furnished with a "company bed" (which is the best bed in the house), a yellow or brown shiny oak dresser, a few chairs, and perhaps the enlarged portraits of deceased relatives hanging on the wall. The second room is occupied by the mill worker and his wife and the smaller children. In addition to containing two beds, it must also serve as the living room for the family.

The fireplace is fitted with a small coal grate over which is a cheaply constructed mantel on which rests a small clock and whatever patent medicines the various members of the family have been taking during the past year or two. The floor is bare. A sewing machine inevitably sits in the corner. Perhaps also, a calendar, a Blum's almanac, and a few framed pictures or magazine covers will adorn the otherwise bare walls. The remaining bedroom serves as sleeping quarters for the rest of the family. The fourth room must serve as the kitchen and dining room.

YOUTH AND AGE IN THE MILL VILLAGE

The "company room" in addition to being used as a spare bedroom may serve as a place where the young people do their courting, if the automobile, out-of-doors, and movies have not supplanted it. The cotton mill boy usually wooes and weds a cotton mill girl. Quite generally he chooses one of his co-workers. Perhaps there is less actual formal courting among the rank and file of cotton mill workers than among the young people of the more leisure classes. The probabilities are that a considerable proportion of the courtship is carried on in connection with the work so that there is relatively less courtship activity apparent to the outside observer. Parties they may have, but these are comparatively rare. The young cotton mill worker may occasionally take his "best girl" to

the "picture show," or if he is fortunate enough to own a car take her for a ride especially on week-ends. If there is a carnival in town he will inevitably be on hand with his girl and ride the Ferris wheel, the roller coaster, or the merry-go-round with her. The cotton mill girl's opportunity for marrying outside of her class is comparatively small. The cotton mill boy also finds his range of choice restricted in a similar manner so that in the main a cotton mill worker marries a cotton mill wife and has cotton mill children. The average cotton mill girl abhors the possibility of living a single life until she reaches the age of 25, for due to the social attitudes of cotton mill people the girl's chances of marrying after 25 are rare indeed. This forces early marriage and insures a large family.

Cotton mill workers are preëminently young. The peak of their earning power is reached before the age of 30. The nature of much of the work—and the best paying jobs, at that—is such that it depends upon agility and nimbleness of fingers and good eyesight for best results, so that the worker of 35 or 40 years of age finds that his earning capacity is decreasing rapidly. From then on he finds it increasingly hard to get a new job after a move, since every mill tends to fill vacancies with younger workers. If a man has been a faithful employee the company may make an effort to take care of him in various ways. A few may be employed as sweepers, some as watchmen, others at odd jobs about the mill which do not require attendance on the machines. A very few manage to be promoted to foremen positions. The remainder are more or less turned loose, as it were, to find whatever employment they can. For this reason the man generally depends upon his children to support the family after he has reached a certain age. If he has no support from his children the situation may become serious. Often in such cases when he begins to be obliged to take less skilled and poorer paying jobs he and his wife go to a farm. This is especially true if the couple lived on a farm in the early period of their married

life. If he remains in the mill village he may care for the garden. Some buy a mule and a one-horse wagon with which they cultivate a small patch of ground near-by. A few of the old people plow the little gardens of the mill families who wish to raise a part of their food supply on the small plot of ground furnished by the mill company. Some old men and old women alike keep an eye on their grandchildren so that a young mother may go to the mill. And thus older generations move on, making way for whatever new day and new generations may come.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPING MILL VILLAGE

The preceding general picture of the cotton mill village and its people must, of course, be completed through a view of the way in which it has developed and an understanding of the concrete facts and situations of its present status. Knowledge of its backgrounds is essential to a complete understanding of its present and future problems.

It is profitable, therefore, to note some of the steps and processes through which the village has come. In a county like Gaston where many mills are already located, the process of building a new one is relatively simple. Lumber and brick are quickly transported to the mill site which, though it may be out in the open country, is located on a railroad. Workmen are brought in and the construction of the company houses is begun. The dwellings are built in a minimum time for they must provide shelter for these and other workmen who are shortly to be engaged in the construction of the mill itself. In an almost unbelievably short time a whole village of houses has sprung up, perhaps even in an open cotton field where one may still clearly see the cotton ridges two or three years afterwards. When the company houses have been completed excavations for the mill site are also getting under way and the actual construction of the mill is begun. This is the simple process by which the mill and its village come into existence. Actual study of the factual data concerning the construction of the mills in the South in the 80's shows that something similar to the process pictured above was then being carried out. On account of a peculiar set of circumstances, the building of a cotton mill without the construction of the mill village also was not regarded as a practicable

policy. The result was the construction of a mill village along with every mill. In time the practice became sufficiently widespread to develop a traditional association between the cotton manufacturing industry in the South and the southern cotton mill village.

THE GENERAL PATTERN

In spite of this traditional association, the mill village antedates in origin the development of southern cotton manufacturing. As a matter of fact, the practice was copied from New England when southern cotton manufacturing was in its infancy; and New England, in its turn, had followed the practice of some of the best known early English mills. It became rooted in southern industrial soil as the easiest solution to the housing problem. The poverty-stricken condition of the people who went into the mills made it impossible for them to build their own homes. There was no local real estate capital or development available. The condition in which the poor white found himself thus helped to pave the way for the development of the southern cotton mill village and all the various forms of paternalistic practices that have since been adopted.

At first the houses were often built of logs, or were simple, unceiled frame buildings hardly more than sheds; but as the industry prospered, these unsightly structures gradually gave way to a larger and better type of house. The three-room house became the most common. Some mills adopted the six-room, two-family dwelling. Both types were usually built of frame, though in some localities brick houses were constructed.[1] The most common characteristic of these early company houses was their similarity. Not only was it the usual practice to build all the houses in a village with three rooms, except those provided for the officials of the company, but all were designed and built according to the same plan.

[1] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Bulletin No. 263: Housing by Employers in the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), p. 145.

Whenever they were painted, all were painted alike, with the same trimmings and finishings. These features gave to the southern cotton mill village the dull, monotonous appearance for which it has been conspicuous.

To add to the monotony the houses were built in rows, equidistant from each other, along wide but poorly laid-out streets that conformed in general to the gridiron plan. Seldom was the contour of the land observed and streets laid out accordingly. An open field or a barren, red hillside was often chosen as the site for a mill village. Devoid of trees, flowers, and all vegetation except that which could withstand the adverse conditions, these villages were not designed to develop the aesthetic and artistic side of life. The houses, the streets, and the whole village simply reflected the condition of the industry in its early stages.

THE COMPANY STORE AND THE TRADE CHECK

The story of the early development of the mill village would not be complete without mention of the company store, for the same general conditions that gave rise to the company house also contributed to the rise of the company store. When the mill was built, the houses constructed, and the prospective workers with their families were brought in, the need of a general merchandise and grocery supply store became apparent and pressing. The same poverty-stricken conditions that prevented the workers from building homes of their own, and which led to the erection of houses by the company, also prevented any of the workers from taking advantage of this opportunity of becoming merchants. Even though the necessary financial requirements could have been met by the workers, their ignorance and short-sightedness probably would have doomed such an enterprise to failure.

Linked up with the company store was the system of payment of the workers with the company check, which was redeemable in goods at the company store. In addition to the payment of goods in kind, many companies adopted the prac-

tice of free house rent as a part of the wages of the workers. These practices merely meant that the companies could operate on less working capital. For a time there was little opposition on the part of the workers. They probably agreed with their employers and the public generally that the mill was conferring a favor upon them in providing employment. The cotton mill had been hailed as the economic salvation of a large portion of the South's population. This was the cause of the very cordial relations existing between the owner and laborer during the early days of the revival. However, as time went on and as the trade check came to be generally instituted in most southern mills, the mill worker still found himself far from economic independence. He had simply changed one phase of dependence for another. The worker was gradually disillusioned, and his warm sympathy for the mill owner, whom he had thought to be his best friend, was considerably lessened. Many were outspoken in their opposition to the trade check system. The following extracts from letters of employees written to the North Carolina Bureau of Labor and published in the Bureau's annual report show concisely the extent of the dissatisfaction existing primarily on account of the trade check system and the long work day:

> This mill runs day and night. The day hands commence work at 6 o'clock in the morning and run until 7 o'clock at night. They stop at 12 o'clock for dinner and ring the bell at 12:30 o'clock. I contend that the hands are in actual motion 13 hours per day. The trade check system is used here, and it is not as good as cash, at this place or any other place. If the hands trade their checks to any other firm, and they present them for cash, this firm demands a discount of ten per cent. The best trade check used in this county is not worth over 75 cents. Some of the checks used in this county are almost worthless. This long hour system is destroying the health of all the young women who work in the mills. The employment of children in the mills at low wages keeps a great many men out of employment. Our Legislature should do something in regard to the long hour system and the trade checks, and compel the employers to pay cash for labor; then, you see, we could save some of our earnings, which would enable us to have night schools and improve our condition much in the way of education.[2]

[2] *Report of the Commissioner of Labor and Printing* (Raleigh, N. C.: Department of Labor and Printing, 1887), p. 153.

The store and the check system is a curse to all employees and the next legislature should wipe the check system out of existence. They are only issued for speculation on labor. They compel the hands to trade with the proprietors as they are made payable in merchandise at the company's store.[3]

There is no doubt but that the trade check system was a lively issue in the eighties and early nineties. Those who were adventurous enough to essay their powers of writing aired their complaints in plain language and lost no time in stating that their belief was in the solution of the problem through legislative action. However, the tendency here is possibly to see the employees' point of view without a proper appreciation of the other factors in the case. The company store, like the mill village, was probably an outgrowth of several factors that made it the part of wisdom to build a store also when the mill and houses were built. As pointed out elsewhere, the mills were built along waterways, and often these sites were in the open country. Store facilities may have been lacking, and to relieve the situation the idea of the company store was seized upon as a solution. Again, southern manufacturers were competing against heavy odds, for the New England mills had back of them a well trained management and experienced labor. Owing to the great increase in spindles in active operation the yarn market was at times overstocked. This made competition all the more severe. That the company store and the trade check system helped considerably in enabling the southern manufacturer to compete with New England there is little doubt, for the store was a lucrative source of income.

THE SOUTHERN COTTON MILL VILLAGE SINCE 1880

Although the origin of the southern mill village properly belonged to an earlier period, the years immediately following 1880, when the industry was expanding at a phenomenal rate, witnessed the development of the cotton mill village

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

to the point where it became a traditional part of the industry.

Progress in improvement of the villages has kept pace with increasing prosperity of the industry. Probably the most apparent single improvement made in the southern mill village has been in connection with the appearance of the houses. In more recent years, especially within the last decade, there has been a definite tendency toward the elimination of the three-room house in favor of the cottage or bungalow. Practically all of the newer villages have been provided with a greater variety in housing design. Along with greater variety in housing design has gone greater variety in painting. The tendency is definitely towards the use of different colors for adjoining houses. Each year it is becoming more unusual to find a row of six or eight houses built and painted exactly alike. Where the same color is used, variety in trimming has sometimes been substituted. As a consequence, the drab, monotonous appearance of the older villages has been to a large degree eliminated.

On the contrary, no significant improvement in the size of houses has been made. The four-room house has probably become more common than a half century ago. However, where there has been a tendency toward an increased number of rooms per dwelling, there has followed a parallel decrease in the size of rooms.

A further tendency in housing provisions in southern mill villages has been the movement toward the general adoption of the single-family dwelling. The two-family house was relatively common in the older villages, and evidences of this type of structure may still be found in many of the older villages scattered throughout the South. Moreover, in order to provide for workers detached from families, dormitories have been constructed by many of the larger mills.

Although brick houses have been constructed in some villages, frame dwellings have always been the most common. That the tendency is toward an even more general use of the frame dwelling is seen in the fact that practically all

of the brick houses are located in the older villages. A survey, conducted in 1917 by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics covering housing conditions in 10,609 dwellings in a number of southern cotton mill villages, showed that 97 per cent of the 10,609 dwellings were frame structures, while only three per cent, or 293 of the houses were of brick. Of the 293 brick houses, 191, or 65.4 per cent, were in one Georgia city.[4]

Improvements made on the streets and sidewalks closely parallel the progress that has been achieved in housing conditions. An increasing number of manufacturers are seeing the value of hard-surfaced streets and sidewalks, and a number of company towns have already gone to the expense of hard-surfacing the roadways. In some instances the services of an experienced landscape architect have been employed in mapping out plans for the villages. The most significant departure from the ordinary course of affairs is seen in the more frequent tendency to lay out the streets in conformity with the contour of the land rather than according to the usual gridiron plans.

The best mill villages in the South today are in themselves evidences of the vast improvements that have been made over the villages built several decades ago. Not a few corporations have gone to the expense of providing shade trees and shrubbery, and are in other ways beautifying the grounds and improving the general appearance of the villages.

Not all mills, however, have made the significant improvements mentioned. The preceding statements may be applied only to the most progressive southern mill villages, for many manufacturers have seemingly been content to do nothing toward improving the conditions and the appearance of their villages. As a result, villages may yet be found that present a general run-down appearance.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

INDUSTRIAL WELFARE WORK [5]

A consideration of welfare work in southern mill villages should be made at this point because it has formed a considerable part of the history of the southern mill village. Furthermore, the conditions making for the development of the mill village and for the growth of industrial welfare work were identical. In fact they may be considered as two aspects of the same problem.

The pauperized condition of the landless whites in the South, who have furnished the great bulk of the labor force for southern cotton mills, not only encouraged the development of the company-owned mill village, but increased the feeling among the people that the manufacturer was doing a benevolent act in setting up a mill. The very fact, that the movement to build cotton mills in order that the poor whites might find work assumed a moral and philanthropic force following the Civil War,[6] served to increase in the minds of the higher social classes generally that paternalistic feeling upon which rests the present industrial welfare policies of many southern cotton manufacturers.

The ignorant and illiterate condition of many of those brought into the mill villages from the farms and their lack of knowledge as to methods of health and sanitation and of correct living habits generally gave to manufacturers the final inducement needed to institute industrial welfare work. Experience showed that, on account of deprivation, many mothers of these destitute families had never learned the art of housekeeping. Where the family comprised from five to

[5] The term "industrial welfare work" is here taken to include such activities on the part of manufacturers as aiding and supervising public education; providing day nurseries for children of working mothers; furnishing hospital, first aid, nursing, and medical facilities; sponsoring athletic activities; creating parks and playgrounds; and other activities and practices of the same general nature.

[6] See Harriet L. Herring, *Welfare Work in Mill Villages: The Story of Extra-Mill Activities in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929).

ten or more persons, and where living, cooking, and eating had all been done in one room, carelessness and indifference to homemaking had resulted.[7] When such families, fresh from the conditions described, were brought into the mill village, old habits inevitably tended to persist. The much greater density of population in the villages did not allow for the careless practices that might be followed in the open country, without injury to the health of the community. Much sickness and death resulted. Probably an extreme case, referred to by one writer, of the results of ignorance and laziness on the part of the new workers occurred at the Pelzer mills, South Carolina, when that large corporation was just beginning production.

> They put them into their neat, new cottages, and supplied them with food, when lo, they began dying like sheep with the rot! At the Pelzer Mills I heard it stated that a train load of them were practically wiped out....
>
> It was found that many of the very poor, gathered in from the plantations and the country lying out around, had sunk to such a low state of degradation that they neither knew how to take care of themselves, nor properly prepare and eat the food which they suddenly found themselves supplied with in unstinted quantities.[8]

Whether or not conditions as described above were in any way general, it is certain that there existed a universal need of education in habits of cleanliness and a general method of better living.

However, it is not to be inferred that the institution of industrial welfare work originated at this time. Such practices had been tried with varying degrees of success for a

[7] T. R. Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not* (New York: Grocia Pub. Co., 1907), pp. 59-70.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 421-22. Note: The author of *The Child That Toileth Not* was one of a group selected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1907 to make an investigation of conditions in southern cotton mills and to study the condition of the mountain whites, the source of labor supply for the mills. The author claimed that since his report was different from that which the Bureau desired, it was rejected as not portraying the facts. He then published his findings in a separate volume.

century or more.[9] Some of the specific programs were copied almost wholly from New England. In 1846, for example, a welfare program was instituted at the Graniteville Mill, Graniteville, South Carolina. William Gregg, the chief promoter of the mill, had spent some time in Lowell, Massachusetts, studying the methods and policies of the large corporations at that place. He sought to utilize the information thus gained in his plant at Graniteville. Houses and schools were built for the benefit of the employees, and other activities were started that had as their purpose the betterment of the workers. The project at Graniteville was not only successful, but it became the incentive for an even larger undertaking at Augusta, Georgia, a short time afterward, where several large factories were built.[10]

EXTENT OF WELFARE WORK

According to a recent study of the history and status of industrial welfare work in 300 North Carolina textile mills it was found that approximately 20 per cent of these mills had one or more welfare workers in their employment in 1926.[11] Approximately 35 per cent of these mills had at some time or other employed a welfare worker, while about 40 per cent had contributed to the support of the public schools in their respective localities at one time or another. Thus it appears that no welfare work of any kind has been instituted at any time in over one-half of the textile mills studied. Furthermore, since the 300 mills studied included over one-half of the textile mills in the state it is probable that the results are typical for the state as a whole. While considerably less than one-half of the mills had, at any time, any form

[9] Broadus Mitchell, "Cotton Mills in Southern Civilization" in *Twenty-five Years of Southern Textile Progress* (*Cotton*, January, 1924), p. 203. See also his *William Gregg* (U. of N. C. Press, 1928).

[10] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[11] Herring, *op. cit.*, p. 43. The term "welfare worker" here includes anyone employed as a nurse, social worker, playground director, or any teacher of home economics employed by the mill.

of welfare work, it should be noted that only the larger mills as a rule have found it practicable to organize a program of welfare work. In view of this it is probable that one-half or over of the textile workers in the state have been reached at one time or another by these activities.

Since the larger mills as a rule have been the ones to find the welfare program a practicable policy, and since approximately 40 per cent of the public schools have been aided at some time or other by the mills, welfare work evidently still occupies an important place in North Carolina mill village life. It should also be noted in passing that since the mills in South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama are larger on the average than the mills in North Carolina, a larger proportion of the wage-earners in those states are probably reached by welfare activities than the wage-earners in North Carolina cotton mills.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Welfare work in the mill villages of the South generally at present comprises activity in nursery, kindergarten, and school work; the construction and operation of community houses and cafeterias; the furnishing of hospital, first aid, nursing and medical facilities; the creation of parks and playgrounds; the sponsoring of numerous forms of athletic activities; the organization and supervision of bands and clubs, and club work for both young and old; the institution of special devices for improving the attractiveness of the homes, expressed concretely in the growing of flowers and in annual flower shows; in brief, the scope of welfare activity among southern cotton mills comprises practically every form of social betterment. A list of this kind, however, may be misleading unless we remember that only a few of the largest mills or groups of mills carry on all of them. Most companies carry on only a few of these activities.

Southern cotton manufacturers have probably been more active in aiding the public schools than in any other form of

welfare work.[12] Many schools are subsidized by the mills. The salaries of the superintendents and teachers are frequently paid in part or in full by the company. In many cases the school building has been constructed by the corporation. In some instances where the county provides for a school term of only six months the mill authorities voluntarily run the school for two or three months longer.

As a rule, the extent to which the company supports the school depends upon the type of mill village in which the school is located. The rural mill usually pays a property tax to the county, and leaves the school affairs, including the length of the term, and general support and control, entirely in charge of the respective county officials. Mills located within the corporate limits of the towns and cities also pay a property tax and exercise little or no influence on the administrative policies of the school. It is in the mills that are located in the unincorporated towns, or suburban mill villages, that we find the typical "mill schools." Since the company town or suburban mill village is generally not incorporated and often not included within any special school district, and since no local but a county tax only is levied on the property, the county funds are not sufficient to run the schools for more than six months. Where this condition prevails the mill usually subsidizes the school, furnishing funds sufficient to provide for an eight or a nine month term.[13] When this is done it is almost inevitable that those contributing a large share of the finances should exercise considerable control over, if not actually dictate the policies of, the school as well as hire and fire the teachers just as if they were regular employees of the mill.

[12] The following references to a few of the major welfare activities have been included to lend concreteness to the study of welfare work as it is being carried on in some of the most progressive mill villages in the South.

[13] J. H. Olmstead, "An Intimate Story of Social Service" in *Twenty-Five Years of Southern Textile Progress* (*Cotton,* January, 1924), pp. 219-221.

In addition to close supervision of the public school, some cotton manufacturers have for decades encouraged the organization of night schools for adult workers. By taking advantage of the night classes illiterate workers have frequently learned to read and write. The more industrious have sometimes taken this opportunity to rise into the ranks of the official class. In addition to instruction in reading and writing, simple problems of arithmetic, correlated whenever possible with mathematical problems the worker may meet in his work, are also taught. More advanced classes have sometimes taken up the study of practical problems dealing with mill work.

A more recent development in educational practice in mill villages is the teaching of home economics to the working girls and married women. Classes in cooking and sewing have been organized by teachers trained in the theory and practice of general home-making.[14]

Another phase of industrial welfare work fairly common among mills having any welfare work whatever concerns the provisions that have been made for day nurseries. The following description of a day nursery gives a picture of what is being done by some of the more progressive mills in providing for the care of the children of working mothers.

> Last, but by no means least important of the institutions developed here is the day nursery. Children are brought here by their parents as they go to work in the morning. A matron, trained and experienced in the care of children, is there to receive these children in a warm, comfortable house. These children are given a warm bath and put into a nursery uniform. At nine o'clock they are given a lunch of bread and milk, then at noon they are given a good substantial dinner suited to their several ages. After dinner their faces and hands are bathed and they are put to bed for an afternoon nap. At three they are fed another lunch of milk and bread and then changed to their own clothes ready for their parents to get them as they leave the mill. Much attention is given them during the day in regard to entertainment and discipline.[15]

[14] C. J. Balliet, *World Leadership in Denims* (Greensboro, N. C.: Proximity Mfg. Co., 1925), p. 41.

[15] J. H. Olmstead, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

The more progressive mills are beginning also to devote attention to health conditions in the mill villages. Practically all mills have arrangements with a local doctor for administering prompt aid in case of industrial accidents. Some have set up first-aid rooms, in charge of a member of the nursing staff. Minor operations have even been performed in emergency cases.

In some instances, the services of a physician may also be secured without charge. In needy cases especially do the employers see that the attendance of a physician is secured. A very few mills have also established hospital facilities, usually run on a coöperative basis. A small weekly fee may be charged against each employee for membership in the hospital association. The fee entitles the worker or any member of his family to free hospital treatment in case of sickness.

There are various types of work carried on for recreation and development of young people. Scout organization for the boys is frequently the product of the efforts of a local minister or the principal of the school, and is often found in mill villages where no social workers are employed by the mill company. The organizations of girl scouts and campfire girls are probably less numerous than the boy scout troops. The girls' organizations are usually supervised by social workers and are therefore rarely found in a mill village that does not employ the services of a social worker.

ATTITUDES TOWARD WELFARE WORK

In consideration of the history and status of welfare work in mill villages, what may be said as to its value to the people? It is conceivable that welfare work played a very important, if not an essential, part in the revival of cotton manufacturing in the South following 1880. The new workers, fresh from the worst conditions of poverty, needed instruction in better methods of living. To the extent that welfare work helped the poor white to adjust himself to new standards of living,

it produced good results. Supervision of living conditions, which necessitated the furnishing of conveniences that the normal individual will usually provide for himself, seems to have been the best means of remedying a bad situation. But, although welfare work was probably necessary and productive of beneficent results several decades ago, the question arises as to whether or not it is best for the mill population for the practice to be continued. Have the people developed to the point where they are able to take charge of their own community affairs?

As has been observed, not all cotton mills at the present time engage in welfare work of any type. The majority of the mills merely provide houses for the workers. Are the people in mill villages, which have no welfare work, less contented, or less adjusted to their environment, than workers in villages having a highly specialized system of welfare activities? The attitude of the workers themselves toward welfare work would seem to convey the best answer to the question. Are the workers appreciative, for example, of the nominal charges for house rent, water and lights, wholesale prices on coal, the advice of the nurse and the social workers, and of parks and playgrounds that have been supplied for them? The opinion of teachers, welfare workers, mill superintendents, and inspectors is that "as a rule the mill help does not greatly value, or appreciate in either sense of the word the efforts for their entertainment or for their advancement. First, they do not respond with any feeling of gratitude because they argue that all the money being spent on them is due them anyway as wages and some of them would rather have it in their envelopes. Most of them feel that they earn it as truly as their cash wages." [16]

[16] R. W. Edmonds, *Cotton Mill Labor Conditions in the South and New England* (Baltimore: Manufacturers Record Pub. Co., 1925), p. 17. Note: In 1925 Mr. Edmonds spent some time in studying conditions in southern cotton mill villages. In making the study he interviewed, in addition to mill officials, responsible people of other vocations living in the villages who were qualified to give authoritative opinions on topics with which they were the most intimately associated.

The attitude of indifference is shown by the willingness of workers to move from a mill village having a highly specialized welfare program to a mill village that furnishes nothing more than the dwellings, water and lights. Workers seem to move to a mill village lacking welfare work with the same readiness as to a mill that has its community houses, social workers, health supervision, and other welfare activities. In brief, the attitude of the worker toward welfare activities resolves itself into a general spirit of indifference. He seems to regard such activities as irrelevant to the real problem of living. If these facilities are placed at his disposal, he accepts them as a matter of course; if lacking, he does not miss them.

Even though cotton mill workers have an indifferent attitude toward welfare work, it is conceivable that not all families in the cotton mill villages of the state have yet reached the point where they can take entire charge of their affairs. For, while a large part of the cotton mill population, perhaps, even entire villages in some instances, are no longer in need of supervised welfare work, and could best provide for themselves, there are others who either cannot or will not. In every group of people there is an irresponsible element, which, if left to its own habits of shiftlessness, may obstruct progress. This element, unfortunately, seems still to be present in large numbers in cotton mill villages. The labor force of North Carolina mills is still being considerably augmented each year from the tenant farms in the Piedmont and mountain sections where conditions may not be materially different from what they were several decades ago. For this group, some form of educational guidance and direction is necessary if the best results are to be secured, both as to living conditions and the efficiency of the worker.

Along with the benefits achieved by industrial welfare work in southern mill villages, there have doubtless been many harmful results. An analysis of the conditions in the mill village, however, would seem to lead to the conclusion

that the time has not yet arrived when welfare work can be entirely suspended by the manufacturers. A final estimate of the situation must necessarily be based upon more data than are now available. A beginning can be made, however, in the basic materials presented in the remaining chapters of the book.

CHAPTER IV

A RURAL MILL VILLAGE

The first type of village studied was the rural mill village. Dependence on water power necessitated the location of the early factories along the streams, and sites were often selected in the open country. The coming of the factory and the mill village, therefore, constituted the first movement toward urbanization. Many mill villages have got no farther than this first step, further development for some reason or other having ceased. As a consequence the little village has remained very similar in form to what it was when built. On account of its comparative isolation, the small mill village in the open country has come to be in a class by itself.

HOW THE VILLAGE LOOKS

Village A, which has been selected to illustrate the rural mill village, is located on a narrow flat on the bank of a stream between two hills that rise abruptly from the bed of the stream on one side and from a narrow plain on the other. Although the topographical features of the village offer an excellent opportunity for developing the natural beauty of the surroundings, it is apparent that no definite form of town planning has been instituted. The various owners of the mill in the several decades of its existence have followed a policy of indifference toward the upkeep of the village and premises. Two poorly maintained roadways, almost impassable because of neglect and the effects of washing rains, and a number of narrow, winding footpaths, serve as streets and sidewalks.

The thirty-odd houses, all of which are owned by the

company, are scattered indiscriminately over the two hillsides overlooking the mill and the stream lying between. Many of the houses are badly in need of repair and repainting. The dwellings average three rooms, but not all have been built according to the same plan. An improvement noted is that all have been equipped with electric lights.

On the same side of the stream and adjacent to the mill, stands the sole business building in the village. One section of the building is used for a warehouse, while another is used for the mill office. The only store in the village is also located in the building. The structure was formerly the company store, but since its discontinuance the company has rented the building, and the store is now operated as a private enterprise over which the corporation exercises little control. The motion picture house, a common feature in North Carolina mill villages, is conspicuous by its absence. The only church in the village is a small frame structure. Although formerly maintained by one denomination, it is now used as a community church. Services are held at such times as it is possible to secure a minister from one of the churches in the surrounding section. Aside from the church there are no buildings of a public or semi-public nature. The school, built and maintained by the county and attended by both farm and mill children, is located a short distance from the village.

AN UNINCORPORATED VILLAGE

As the village is not incorporated there is no local municipal government. Police supervision is administered by the deputy sheriff of the township, a county official under the direction of the county authorities. The salary of the deputy is paid in full by the county, and he is in no manner responsible to the directors of the corporation in the discharge of duties in the village.

Since North Carolina rural mill villages are, as a rule, not incorporated, and since the county and township division is uniform throughout the state, the administration of govern-

ment in this type of village tends to conform to that of the village described. In some cases, however, especially in the larger rural mill villages, the company may employ one or more policemen who are chiefly responsible to the company. This practice, as will be pointed out later, is fairly common in unincorporated company towns.

FEW SOCIAL CONTACTS

The isolated location of the village, further accentuated by the lack of railway facilities, makes impossible ready contact with centers of business and social activity. Even though two well maintained county highways connect the village with the two nearest towns, four miles distant, there is little contact with other people.

Although the population of the village is small, offering an opportunity for the development of neighborly relationships, certain factors apparently hinder the development of community solidarity. The policy of segregating officials and workers, common in most mill villages, is accentuated here by the location. The homes of the superintendent, overseers, and second-hands are located on one side of the stream, while on the other side are the dwellings occupied by the workers. Working class families must secure water from open wells, but families of the officials are provided with running water pumped from a deep well nearby. In striking contrast to the large number of native trees which supply abundant shade in summer and add to the natural beauty of the surroundings in the portion of the village occupied by the officials, is the treeless hillside and the barren, red soil where live the workers and their families.

THE VILLAGERS THEMSELVES

A picture of the structural arrangement of the little rural mill village and of its setting generally has been presented. What may now be said with regard to those who live and work here? In the first place, it should be recalled that the

mill and the village are located out in the open country away from transportation facilities, amusements, and centers of population. There is no form of commercialized amusement for these people to aid in relieving the monotonous existence they encounter. The mill has provided no parks or playgrounds. The old mill pond still stands even though the mill is no longer run by water power. Nature, with the aid of the pond, has here stepped in to provide the two hundred inhabitants with the one opportunity for diversion from the daily routine, in the form of fishing. Other than the natural beauty of the surroundings, the village and community are void of further means of recreation. Naturally, therefore, there is little to attract an energetic, wide-awake, social population.

There are several rather pronounced characteristics associated with the people living in this village which seem to fit them to their surroundings. In the first place, unusually large families are the rule, frequently numbering as many as eight or ten. Several households also keep boarders and roomers, a situation which tends to increase overcrowding in the small three and four-room structures and at the same time to lower the standard of living. A second characteristic is a high rate of illiteracy. The inability to read and write extends to the young as well as to the old people. One entire family of eight persons is illiterate. The children have never attended school. In fact, the father has openly stated that he does not believe in education. The little group of people as a whole seem indifferent to literary attainments or culture of any description. Not one of the working class families takes a daily newspaper. There are no books of any description in evidence. Occasionally a cheap fiction magazine or a sensational newspaper is seen lying around. One outstanding exception to the general rule has been observed. A young woman, herself the mother of an illegitimate daughter, has purchased a piano and is very much interested in music.

A further distinguishing characteristic is concerned with

the number of times the families have changed places of residence. Practically every one of the thirty or more working class families has an unusually high rate of mobility. One family has lived in 32 different places in a six-year period. Quite frequently a family has been found who has moved around in a circle of five or six mill villages, making the complete circuit and starting over again. Several instances have been discovered of a family moving away from a mill village and moving back again three or four different times. There is little doubt but that some of these people have changed residences so frequently that little opportunity has been given for the children to continue in school with sufficient regularity to make any substantial progress. On the other hand, it is probably just as true to infer that one cause for the high rate of mobility is the desire on the part of the family head to shirk the responsibility and expense of sending his brood to school. By moving about frequently he can evade the school attendance officer.

There is probably a very definite reason for this particular group of people being in the little country mill village. Through the processes of competition and social selection the cotton mill workers are apparently being arrayed in different levels according to their stability as workers and adaptability for the work. The stable cotton mill worker is being collected in the most accessible and the otherwise most desirable mill villages. The same force that is performing this process is likewise sending the transient and the highly mobile cotton mill worker into the least accessible and least desirable mill villages. One can hardly study the little group in question and not be cognizant of some such process at work. Through this sifting process the little village has collected the type of workers that its location and lack of facilities would naturally draw; or rather it might be more accurate to say that the people who have drifted into the village are there because the opportunities for employment in the more desirable mill villages have been denied them. Their highly mobile record,

along with an apparent shiftlessness, has made them incapable of bidding against the more substantial workers and, as a consequence, they have been forced to accept whatever work they could get.

Finally, it is rather evident that the social attitudes of these people have been so completely colored by their experiences, hardships, and disappointments that they may fairly well be pictured as a people who have lost hope. This statement applies with peculiar emphasis to those families whose experiences throughout successive generations in the struggle against poverty have sapped creative energies or hope of ever raising themselves out of the social mire into which they have sunk. The extent to which such experiences and feelings are present in the group may well account for their apparently indifferent attitude toward improving their condition.

CHAPTER V

A COTTON MILL TOWN

Contrasted with the rural mill village, with its one mill, few dwellings, and lone merchandising establishment, is the cotton mill town made up of several mills and mill villages and a business section commensurate with the size of the town. A further difference exists in the nature of the local government. The incorporated cotton mill town has its own board of aldermen, mayor and police force, while the rural mill village is under county supervision.

BACKGROUNDS

Town B, selected to illustrate the cotton mill town, is about a half century old. The town was originally begun as a mining center for the surrounding community. The railroad which had just been put through the area was another determining factor in the location of the town site. That the two founders of the town, both of whom were from the North, expected it to develop into an urban area of considerable proportions is amply demonstrated by the fact that the town site as originally mapped and platted was three miles square. Incidentally the town has not yet developed sufficiently to cover the entire area, there being one farm of approximately 150 acres, as well as parts of several other farms, lying entirely within the town limits.

The first people to be attracted to the town were landless whites, prospective miners, and Negroes who had found employment on the railroad. The Negro section, located on the extreme eastern edge of the corporate limits, was separated

from the white section by a vacant space of approximately one-half mile. The present Negro section on the western side of the town developed later and will be referred to in connection with the segregating forces at work in the community at the present time.

Shortly before 1900 the mining boom had vanished because there was no mineral to be found in paying quantities. Here, therefore, was a little community with no substantial promise of survival. In order to keep the village from passing out of existence the original founders, with the assistance of one or two other men, decided to build a cotton mill. Thus the "Old Mill," as it was familiarly called until very recently, came into existence as the first of seven cotton mills to be constructed. In this manner also the town developed into that type of cotton mill community which has been designated as the cotton mill town.

THE COTTON MILL TOWN DEVELOPS

There is evident in the development of the type of cotton mill community classified as the cotton mill town a more or less distinct social process. An effort will here be made to describe that process by indicating how the town came to have its present composition of population and structural arrangement. The inference is that a process somewhat similar to the particular one to be described has operated in giving such communities the peculiar traits and structural characteristics that make them different from the other three types of cotton mill communities specified.

Manifestly, during that period when there were high hopes that the little community would develop into a mining center, persons who were interested in different occupational pursuits were drawn there. While the landless whites furnished the large majority of the few hundred white people in the village before the organization of the first mill, certain other social groups were also drawn into the town. In the first place, there were the original promoters of the town and

their families. There were also business men who moved in to start small grocery and general merchandise stores; others were interested in blacksmithing and various small enterprises. In addition, a few farmers, especially those living at the edge of the town, soon came to exercise a direct influence upon the social and political life of the community. Finally there were the few Negroes in the community who made inevitable a dual village life and different standards of living within a village area of a few square miles.

The second and third mills were built practically simultaneously about 1900. By 1910 the fourth and fifth big red brick structures had made their appearance above the tops of the uniform rows of houses. There are at the present time seven cotton mills owned by four corporations which furnish the chief means of employment to the people in the town. The seven mills gave employment to approximately 1,200 people in 1928. The total white population for the same year was estimated at 2,800.

Obviously, during the intervening thirty-year period from the time the first cotton mill came into existence until the last one was built there were forces at work which were determining not only the physical structure of the village but the social and economic structure as well. The community would normally tend to draw other industries and business enterprises commensurate with the development of the textile industry. At every period in the history of the town the cotton industry has been the business as well the industrial barometer. Whether the community could support a $10,000 stock of general merchandise, eight or ten grocery stores, four or six cold drink establishments, and two or three barber shops depended upon the number of cotton mill workers the mills employed and the general condition of the yarn market. Whether or not the population of the town was 1,000, 2,000, or 2,500 depended upon how many families the mill could employ. At one time, during a severe depression in the yarn market, from one-fourth to one-third of the

dwellings in the entire town were vacant. Whether or not the merchant could collect his weekly credit accounts with his mill customers, since the mill worker is usually a week behind, depended upon whether the usual members of the family were working during the week and upon the regularity of the work. Also, whether or not the merchant was able to make a profit through the years or was ultimately to be forced into bankruptcy depended upon how many of the "mill hands" paid their bills.

TRADE

In order to gain a full conception of the extent to which the trades people are dependent upon the cotton mill element one needs only to have recourse to a few facts. By checking over the list of present and past general merchandise stores that have been conducted in the community during the past two decades, it was discovered that of the nine large general merchandise stores in the town five have been forced into bankruptcy, one was moved to another town, and three are still in existence. A similar study of grocery establishments and smaller general merchandise stores would no doubt reveal the same conditions. In other words, the economic well-being of the entire town is so intimately tied up with the cotton industry that economic ruin inevitably faces every form of business as soon as the cotton mill workers cannot pay their bills.

A survey of the business and civic activities of the town in 1928 revealed that there were 56 business establishments, including 23 grocery stores, three general merchandise stores, one bank, two moving picture theatres, four barber shops, five cafes, three meat markets, three pressing establishments, seven garages and filling stations, two hardware stores, one furniture store, and one shoe shop. The survey showed further, eight churches, two school buildings, three fraternal orders, one woman's club, one boy scout troop, one public park, and one swimming pool.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

The administration of municipal affairs is effected through an elected board of aldermen. This body in turn selects the mayor, the police force, town clerk, and other public officials. Little pressure of late has been brought to bear by the corporations in an effort to control the local government. Contrary to what may be expected there have been few representatives of vested interests to serve on the board of aldermen. Occasionally an overseer in a mill is elected to office, but usually not at the instigation of the mill officials. The manufacturers have obviously been content to allow others to direct the municipal affairs. A probable explanation of this generous attitude may be that very few of the present stockholders of the mills reside in the town.

While the town has had from the beginning the advantages of railway transportation, the improved system of highways and the wide utilization of the motor truck for purposes of transportation have made the mills of the town practically independent of the railroad as far as short hauls are concerned. This is especially true with reference to the transportation of the raw product. Usually, however, the mills rely on shipping the manufactured product by rail.

POPULATION GROUPS

The Negro section, composed of about 600 persons, is located on the extreme western edge of the corporate limits of the town and is separated from the white section by a hill of considerable height. The Negro village, situated on the eastern extremity of the community during the early days of the town's history, has since disappeared. It has been customary not to employ Negroes in southern cotton manufacturing on any job inside of the mill building, although they are employed by the mills in different capacities outside of the mill building. They may, however, work in the opening room where the cotton is taken from the bales, or they may have

certain duties about the machine shop, boiler room, or dyeing plant. Of late years, particularly since the seven mills have resorted to the transportation of the raw product by truck, a large number of Negroes in the town have been utilized in truck driving and general hauling. A large proportion of the Negro and white population of the town is, therefore, directly supported by the cotton mills, while the remaining elements of both races are indirectly supported from the same source through the various businesses and activities which derive their patronage from the cotton mill workers.

Of the 522 white families living in the town in 1928, 70.1 per cent were cotton mill families, 8.3 per cent were engaged in some other manufacturing or mechanical pursuit, 7.1 per cent were dependent on trade and merchandising, 3.2 per cent on domestic and personal service, 2.9 per cent on clerical work, 2.3 per cent were engaged in some form of professional service, 1.7 per cent owed their existence to farming, and three families, or 0.6 per cent, had independent incomes and were not gainfully employed.

Of the 366 cotton mill families living in the town, 272 or 74.3 per cent were housed in the 269 dwellings owned by the mill companies. Eighty-three mill families, or 22.7 per cent, owned the homes in which they were living. The remaining 11 families were living in dwellings rented from sources independent of the companies. The 269 dwellings owned by the mills are not all located in distinctly outlined mill villages. Only one mill village is definitely set apart from the rest of the town. The 73 houses composing this village are in many respects a unit in themselves. Two villages of 113 and 27 houses, respectively, gradually merge into each other. The remaining 56 of the 269 mill houses are scattered over the town.

As far as contact with other social groups is concerned, it may be inferred from the foregoing description that the segregation of the cotton mill population in this particular town presents no serious problem. The structural arrangement

of the villages and the large percentage of the workers who own their homes or rent from sources other than the mill indicate a very desirable adjustment.

However, there are certain other factors that tend partly to overcome these advantages. There are evident in the town at least two and possibly three distinct social levels of cotton mill workers. The group enjoying the highest social rating is composed of home-owning workers. This group is able to make social contacts with other occupational groups more or less on terms of equality, and therefore does not feel the forces of segregation. The second group of workers, possibly less clearly defined, is composed chiefly of those workers who, though they do not own their homes, have become fairly permanent residents of the town. This group constitutes a substantial lot of folk, and although they tend to be rated slightly lower, or perhaps rate themselves slightly lower than the home-owning workers, they suffer little from exclusion.

It is with the third group of workers that the problem of social status presents itself. This group constitutes the drifting population. Their rate of mobility is high. The short period of residence dissociates the families from the real life of the town and develops an attitude of indifference toward civic betterment. Irresponsibility would seem to be the principal distinguishing characteristic of the group as a whole. Due to their outlook and their conditions of life, they are received neither by their fellow workers, nor by the other occupational groups of the town as social equals. This group generally does not seem possessed with the desire to mingle with other groups. In brief, the floating element of the cotton mill population offers one of the most difficult problems confronting the industry in North Carolina.

COMMUNITY DISORGANIZATION

In a town where the population changes materially every few years there may result a general lack of coöperation and

interest in community progress. This situation exists in the cotton mill town under consideration. In addition to the indifference toward community progress manifested by the class of drifters described there are certain other disorganizing forces at work. Whereas the cotton mill workers are probably never the chief participants in these demoralizing influences they nevertheless play an important part in them because of their numbers and their connection with the life of the town generally. In the first place, factional political strife is a disorganizing force. These factional differences do not follow party lines but are fostered and kept alive by traditional family quarrels. There are in the main three fairly distinct factions. One of these is composed of the larger merchants, professional men, and the well-to-do generally. This group is the most influential of the three factions and is interested for the most part in constructive community action. The school, the churches, and the civic organizations are kept alive through the influence of this group. The second group, perhaps a little less influential than the first, perhaps also a little less clearly defined, is composed of the lesser trades people, carpenters, machinists, and a scattering of mill workers. In the main, one finds here the "knockers" or those who habitually tend to obstruct progress. The members of this faction are continually looking for a fight and their forces are always arrayed against whatever plans the first faction may be fostering. The third group is composed chiefly of cotton mill workers. While this element is not a faction in the real sense of the word, it manifests a passive, indifferent attitude toward civic life, and is arrayed against any constructive program that calls for the expenditure of money. This attitude on the part of the cotton mill worker has earned for him the unenviable reputation of being opposed to everything. For the most part, however, he is merely waiting to be lined up for or against a particular measure, depending upon the measure, and the group which makes the most active bid for his support. In this way, the cotton mill workers

tend to serve as a balance of power between the other two factions.

As a general rule the first two factions mentioned will each "put out a ticket" in all town elections. Since the cotton mill workers generally do not support a ticket of their own, the other factions endeavor to collect the mill workers' votes. These factional differences are generally in the foreground even in school board elections. There are consistently two tickets for every election, sometimes three, and in one instance, when the members of the carpenter-machinist faction could not agree among themselves, there were four tickets. The faction which happens to be successful in the election usually finds that its troubles have just begun. Constant efforts of minority factions to obstruct the policies of the group in power must be combated. For this reason the superintendent of schools often finds himself in a dilemma as to what policy to pursue. Often he gets his office as the result of a victory of one faction. Just as often he loses his job for the same reason, for as a rule the school man is compelled to favor one faction or the other. If he does not, he is apt to lose his job all the more quickly by not aligning himself with any group. In the latter case his position may become extremely precarious because every faction gets suspicious and perhaps thinks that he is secretly befriending one group at the expense of the other. As a result of these differences, no superintendent has ever been able to hold his position for a period greater than six years, and generally at the end of three years a new man is hired. The agitation against the superintendent takes concrete form in someone's "carrying around a list"—the list being merely a sheet of paper which all those opposed to the superintendent may sign. The list is circulated freely among the cotton mill workers for, generally with a little persuasion, a large number of "mill hands" will sign the paper even though they may have no particular grievance against the school man. Such practices generally keep the school torn between opposing forces and render largely ineffective the

constructive work it might otherwise accomplish.

The second disorganizing force, which may be inferred from the foregoing, concerns the problem of leadership. The few business and professional men in the town must furnish whatever leadership is to be had. The owners of the mills live elsewhere. The leadership of these men is needed, and their influence as permanent residents of the town would be marked. Residing in another section, it is but natural that they should have little interest in improving the civic life of the community.

THE CHURCH AS AN ORGANIZING FORCE

The churches do constructive work for the assimilation of the mill population with other groups and in harmonizing the factional differences mentioned. The religious life and the social contacts emanating therefrom contribute toward the elimination of conflicting interests. Mill workers are not segregated in their own churches. The membership of each of the eight churches in the town is made up of mill workers and other occupational groups. Mill operatives take an active part in church work in two of the eight churches. A young people's society of one of these churches is directed principally by young persons who work in the mill. The operatives, however, take practically no leading part in church activities in the other six churches. The churches are rendering commendable service in promoting social contact between cotton mill workers and the townspeople generally.

Although the churches in the community are, with the possible exception of the school, doing more toward constructive community building than any other agency, still there are several disorganizing influences connected with the religious life of the community. In the first place the town is overchurched. There are eight churches for a white population of 2,800 about 60 per cent of whom are church members. Since there are no wealthy men in the town and since the cotton mill population is the chief support, especially

for two of the eight churches, it is apparent that funds for support of the churches are definitely limited. None of the churches in fact is able to employ the services of a very capable minister. The tendency to be overchurched has also caused rather strong denominational competition for membership and has aroused denominational prejudices, from which even the ministers themselves are not immune.

THE ABSENCE OF WELFARE WORK

A final disorganizing factor remains to be mentioned. In striking contrast to the elaborate industrial welfare programs in some mill villages, the mill companies in this mill town have pursued a policy of complete *laissez faire* almost from the date of the organization of the first mill down to the present time. In fact, aside from furnishing the dwellings for the workers, the mill has left the employees to work out their own problems without help or hindrance on the part of the mill. This has generally meant that there is no social work worthy of the name carried on in the town. The churches are lacking both in leaders trained in the technique of social work as well as in funds with which to carry on that work. The woman's club stands alone as the only agency functioning in this field, but with a limited membership and a meager budget it has been able to accomplish only a very little.

CHAPTER VI

A SUBURBAN MILL VILLAGE

A THIRD TYPE of cotton mill community is that which for convenience and clearness of terms may be classified as the suburban mill village. The suburban village may be within or without the corporate limits of the town of which it is a part. One difference between the cotton mill town and the suburban mill village is that, whereas cotton manufacturing is the sole industry in the cotton mill town, the suburban mill village may be located in a town supported by a number of industries. Cotton manufacturing, therefore, does not necessarily constitute the basic industrial activity. The manufacture of cotton goods may even represent a later addition to the industries of the community or may have become of secondary importance through the coming of other industrial activities.

Although within the corporate limits of a small city, Village C, the suburban mill village selected to illustrate this type of North Carolina mill village is in many respects a separate community. The village of approximately 600 houses and a population of 4,500 composes a large portion of the city and has developed a business section comparable to that of a town of several thousand.

THE VILLAGE SITE AND ENVIRONMENT

Some comprehension of the setting of this village may be gained from a description of its bounds. The eastern boundary is definitely terminated by the railroad tracks; the southern boundary is composed of another mill village, a cemetery, and a valley; on the western side the village extends

to the open country beyond; while the northern boundary is terminated by several other mill villages.

Although the corporation has gone to considerable expense in improving the condition of the dwellings it has done practically nothing toward the improvement of the streets and sidewalks. Only one paved street traverses the village and this happens to be provided by municipal funds, and serves as the principal state highway through the city. All side streets are of dirt as well as all sidewalks except one paralleling the paved highway.

On the extreme western edge of the village the company has set aside an enclosed space for a baseball park. Through the summer months it has been the policy of the corporation to provide a baseball team for the benefit of the workers. Quite frequently this team may be composed wholly or in part of the regular employees of the mill. The mill company has at times followed the rather general practice of hiring amateur players, chiefly college players, in the double capacity of mill worker and baseball player, with the understanding that the principal job is the latter, while the former acts as a blind to avoid any professional rules as to eligibility of the players by their colleges.

There are in the village sixteen grocery and general merchandise stores, a bank, a furniture store, and a moving picture theatre, besides several cafes, filling stations, garages, and other small business establishments. In addition to the business enterprises there are three churches, one school, a number of lodges, and a cafeteria and community house belonging to the company. The land and buildings in the business block are not owned by the corporation and the mill authorities exercise no control over the business enterprises. The origin of this area of secondary business development apart from the principal business district of the city is to be accounted for in the history of the village and the rapid growth of the city. Built approximately a quarter of a century ago, when the present city was but a small town, the village itself con-

stituted a definite community. In the intervening years the entire area has developed rapidly, with the result that the mill village is now inclosed by other portions of the city.

ATTRACTIVE AND COMFORTABLE HOUSING

The 600 or more houses owned by the corporation vary widely in size, in attractiveness, and in conveniences. Every dwelling is equipped with electric lights and inside toilets. Additions to both mill and village have been made since the plant was constructed. The first houses are not as attractive as those built more recently. The older houses show the characteristic sameness common among the older mill villages. Wherever space has permitted the company has improved appearances by placing a dwelling of the bungalow type between two houses of similar design. This practice has considerably improved the appearance of the older section of the village. A varied type of housing design has been observed in the construction of the dwellings in the newer section. The company has made further effort to beautify the village by planting flowers in the yards and by putting out trees and shrubbery, changes which have made the village a very attractive section of the city.

The company has not been idle in providing accommodations for workers without families. Two large brick veneer dormitories have been built, one for single women, the other for single men. Each of the dormitories is provided with reception rooms, matrons' rooms, and twenty-three regular bedrooms. There are in addition to the two dormitories two apartment houses for married couples. These apartments are equipped with modern plumbing throughout and are provided with shower baths, a gymnasium, social rooms, and a cafeteria.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND RELIGION

A well-equipped playground has been provided with a swimming pool and bath houses. The boy scout troop, under

the leadership of one of the ministers, is a live and growing organization. Several organizations for the girls are also contributing materially toward the building of a better community. The owners of the mill have likewise encouraged the organization and growth of the various orders by providing assembly houses and lodge rooms.

There are four churches in this community. Three of these churches, the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian, have large memberships, composed primarily of mill operatives.

The community house serves as the center of the community and social activities. Four community workers and two nurses are employed, who, in addition to performing the ordinary community activities, make provision for taking care of small children of working mothers. Each child has his own crib, and the room used is well lighted and adequately ventilated. Clothing is provided for the children to wear while they are under the care of the nurse. A play room, built so that sunlight may shine in through the greater part of the day, enables the children to play all through the winter months. A first-aid room in the community house takes care of all accidents happening in connection with mill work.

The duties of the social workers consist of such activities as directing the children's playground, parks, and swimming pool, as well as the social affairs held in connection with the community house. In addition to these duties a comprehensive study of all families in the village has been made and is kept up to date from month to month. Such information as the number of persons in the household, the sex and age of each member of the household, the educational status of the adults, and the grade of the children still in school, as well as the past residences of the family, is obtained by the social worker. These facts are kept on file in the office of the personnel manager and are of value in fitting the worker to the job and for furthering the social adaptation of the new families in the community.

In addition to having direct charge of the first-aid room,

the nurses have duties in the village. Close supervision of all cases of sickness and the singling out of new cases needing the attention of the physician constitute their principal duties.

A STABLE LABOR FORCE

The managers of the mill have been endeavoring to stabilize the working force by hiring only those who have made comparatively few changes from mill to mill. The industrial welfare program, incidentally, is a part of the whole plan to secure a stable working force. If the work record secured by the social worker shows a high mobility the family is not hired. This policy, together with similar policies on the part of a number of other mills in the state, tends to further the process of sifting referred to in the preceding chapter, whereby the cotton mill worker is undergoing a sort of grading and classification depending on his work record.

The mill owners of this village feel that the working force which is stationary and which is not continually undergoing changes in personnel is desirable both from the standpoint of the employer and of the employee. As a rule both parties lose when an old worker leaves and a new one is hired. The management is also under the impression that a more reliable village population can be assembled if care is exercised in the selection of the worker, the inference being that the type of worker inevitably reflects the type of cotton mill family. Hence, a stationary working force, it is felt, means a more reliable, peaceful, and law abiding mill population.

Due to the large number of workers employed, approximately 2,000 on the day shift alone, the village tends to manifest many of the characteristics of a strictly urban area. The primary contacts which control social relationships in the smaller mill villages do not prevail to any great degree even with a fairly low rate of family mobility, while a high rate of family mobility inevitably develops impersonal, secondary relationships. Furthermore, the managers are under the impression that they cannot afford to lose the personal

relationship with the working force so generally maintained in the smaller mills, and hence they have attempted to solve the problem by stabilizing the working force. Incidentally the tendency of the workers to organize is much more prevalent in the larger mills, due to the loss of contact with the employer, as was so clearly demonstrated in the labor unrest in southern mills in 1929. The first attempts to organize, as well as the first strikes, uniformly occurred in the larger mills.

Since the primary relationship exercises a social control over human relationships, primary contacts have a direct bearing on anti-social conduct, delinquency, and crime. Where the primary relationships have given way to secondary, impersonal relationships, whether because of a high rate of mobility or a large mill population, or both, the usual result has been an increase in anti-social conduct. In fact, the point is well illustrated in the present instance. The records of the county superintendent of welfare revealed that the area of greatest concentration of juvenile delinquents in the county was in this mill village. Over one-half of the delinquent cases in the entire city of over 20,000 people came from this one village. Investigation showed that the boys in the village, a large number of whom were even too young to work in the mill, had organized themselves into several small but clearly defined boys gangs and that these gangs were responsible for some of the delinquencies which were occurring.

CHAPTER VII

A COMPANY TOWN

A FOURTH TYPE of cotton mill community may be designated as the company town. The number of North Carolina cotton mill villages coming under this classification is probably smaller than any of the other three types of mill villages. The principal difference between the cotton mill and company towns lies in the form of local government. The mill town is usually incorporated; the company town is not. The mill town is represented by various interests; one company in the company town controls every phase of activity.

AN UNINCORPORATED TOWN

Since Town D, the company town selected for special study, is not incorporated, the administration of government is carried on under county laws, but in accordance with the views of the directors of the corporation owning the town. The police force is composed of two deputies who are elected county officials. The corporation pays a part of the salary of the deputies. Aside from the deputies, there are no executive officers connected with the government of the village. The formation of administrative policies for the town is in charge of the mill authorities who may eject undesirable persons, families, or business firms. In brief, since the corporation owns all the business buildings, real estate, and the town generally, it is in a position to exercise arbitrary authority over every phase of human activity.

THE THREE UNITS

The visitor is impressed with the setting and the arrangement of the town. At the western edge of the village a heavily

wooded hill of practically mountainous proportions adds greatly to the natural beauty of the village. Located on the summit of this hill are the two palatial homes of the present owners of the town. The natural beauty of the place is somewhat marred because of the railroad which divides the town into two practically equal parts. Elevated as the railroad is through the entire length of the town, its red clay banks tend to offset nature's efforts at beautification of the surroundings.

The completed mill village is composed of three separate units of dwellings and two mills. The first mill and original village were built about two decades ago. Since that time the original plant has been extended and a unit to the village of about 100 houses has been added on the southern edge of the village overlooking the river. Several years ago the second mill and final unit of houses were added, making a total of approximately 500 houses in the entire town.

Attention has been called to each of these separate units of the town and they have been so designated because the landscaping and general beauty of the original unit, incidentally the only unit the passer-by is likely to notice, far excels the two more recently added units in beauty and general improvements. In fact, to the ordinary observer the entire village presents the appearance of a model town because unimproved unit number two is hid behind a hill away from the rest of the town. This unimproved section can be entered only by a dirt road and can be seen from only one point, that is, as the observer enters the town from the western side. While the houses in this section are of approximately the same size and design as in the other two sections they have been somewhat neglected. All streets and sidewalks in this area are of dirt and generally rather badly in need of repair. There are few flowers of any description and no grass lawns, hedges, or shrubbery. Judging from impressions gained by interviews the people living in this section are on a lower social level than the residents of the other two sections

of the town.

The last mentioned unit of the village was constructed less than a decade ago. Placed in an open cotton field where one may still see the cotton ridges, the place would inevitably tend to have a barren appearance. However the company has gone to the expense of constructing a better type of house than is generally found even in the newer mill villages. The dwellings are four and five-room bungalows of varied design. Every dwelling is equipped with a bath and complete lavatory facilities. The company has planted shade trees on the lots and has started the grass lawns so that in time this section will be in direct contrast to the unimproved section at the other end of the town.

It is with the intervening section as already intimated, that the company has been chiefly concerned in the matter of town planning and landscaping. This part of the village will be described in greater detail than the two preceding units in order to give a picture of what a "model mill village" looks like. Also to lend concreteness to the picture, this part of the town will be described just as if it were a separate town with no connection with the other two sections.

The corporation has been exceptionally liberal in the construction of paved streets and sidewalks. The village has several miles of streets and sidewalks, as well as a highway which serves as the main street of the village. The streets are not laid out on the usual plan but tend to conform to the surface contours. Considering certain natural obstructions a better system of town planning would be difficult to put into practice. Whatever objections may be raised to the company-owned town, the companies are frequently the leaders in modern, scientific methods of town planning.

ATTRACTIVE, MODERN HOMES

An outstanding feature of Town D is the varied housing design. This aspect of the village stands out in striking contrast to the monotonous similarity usually found in mill vil-

lages. No two adjoining houses are built or painted alike. This variation in housing design gives to the whole village a very pleasing appearance. All of the houses are equipped with electric lights, running water, and inside toilets, while the newer houses are usually provided with bathrooms. A nominal charge of twenty-five cents per room per week is made for rent, and no extra charge is made for water and lights. The corporation has also erected an inn for the benefit of travelers or anyone working in the village who desires this form of accommodation.

THE CHURCH

Three denominations have churches in the village. Two of the churches were built by the corporation, and the membership in every case is composed of mill officials and workers. The young people's societies of the different churches are also composed of representatives from the homes of officials and workers. As far as can be ascertained, amicable relations exist between officials and workers in every phase of religious activity.

THE SCHOOL

The present school building was also built by the company. Although the school is under the direction of the county superintendent of schools the corporation is able to exercise considerable influence over the policies of the school, since the salaries of the local superintendent and of the teachers are paid jointly by the county and the corporation. The company has evidently encouraged education for the young people in the village. In addition to the seven grades below the high school, the first three grades of high school work are also included in the course of study. Work is not offered in the fourth year of high school, since there is no student qualified, but the plan is to offer the complete high school course as soon as students are available.

THE COMMUNITY

Community activities are in charge of a director of social work. The workers are not furnished with an elaborate program of community activities. The owners feel that more beneficial results can be accomplished by having the workers direct their own activities in so far as this is practicable. A community house has been provided as the center of the social life of the village. No definite information can be ascertained as to what extent the young people in the village generally patronize the community house. The same building serves as a home for the public school teachers. It is probable that the young people of the village do not feel free to take advantage of this opportunity for social life, especially if the teachers, as often occurs, are rated on a higher social plane than the workers.

An active boy scout troop, under the direction of the principal of the public school, is composed entirely of boys from operative families. It is reported that a high standard of conduct is required of each member, no boy being retained as a member of the troop who does not conduct himself in an orderly manner. It is reported also that the membership of each of the four fraternal orders in the town is composed jointly of officials and workers. This would seem to indicate a situation favorable to the development of better industrial relations, and of social solidarity among the adult male workers of the town.

Further observations concerning the mill worker and his community will be presented under several categories, representing the results of concrete studies, but also to some extent a composite picture. We begin with the much discussed labor supply of the southern region.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LABOR SUPPLY

Various explanations have been ventured in the attempt to account for the phenomenal growth of cotton manufacturing in the South since its revival in 1880 and the gradual transference of the center of the textile industry from the New England states to the South. Some have claimed that nearness to the raw product has accounted for the striking prosperity of the southern cotton mill. Others have insisted that it is the abundance of water power in the Piedmont hills of Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Alabama that has accounted for the difference. Some see in the lower wage and longer work day the chief reasons for the change. Finally, a few have attributed the development to the labor force, claiming that the homogeneous, native-born population to be found in these states is the chief cause of southern ascendancy in the textiles.

SOURCE OF THE EARLY LABOR SUPPLY

Much has been written concerning the pure blooded Anglo-Saxon stock inhabiting our southern highlands. It has been repeatedly asserted by the racial deterministis that these folk are the purest racial stock to be found anywhere in America. The immigrant has not come into this traditionally pure Anglo-Saxon area because the southern highlanders have lived apart from the rest of the world from the time they settled in the highlands from 1750 to 1800 down to the present time.

Not only has the immigrant failed to penetrate that particular area known as the southern mountain section, but he has just as completely failed to penetrate the Piedmont and

coastal plain sections of these same states. In short, aside from the Negro who was brought here against his will in the capacity of the slave, the states south of the Mason and Dixon line have remained the bulwark of native-born Americans. To demonstrate the full truth of this statement it needs only to be recalled that North Carolina, the center of textile development in the South, had only 0.3 per cent of its total population foreign-born in 1920.

The plight of the "poor whites" in the period following the Civil War when they were dispossessed of both land and jobs has often been told. These people inhabited for the most part the Piedmont and coastal plain sections of the region under consideration. The southern mountaineer comes under a separate category. The condition of the poor whites was the result first of slavery and the plantation system and later of their inability to compete economically with the Negro slaves of former days. The southern mountaineer, on the other hand, even though he was poor and his mountain side unproductive, rarely came into contact with the slave in any manner whatever, since slavery was economically disadvantageous in the mountain sections. His economic status and traditional "backwardness" were due to the barrier of mountains and hence were geographic.

Care is being taken to differentiate between these two groups of southern whites because each group has played a significant part in the drama of southern industrial development. Each group has contributed largely of its members to the labor force that has run the machinery of the southern cotton mills. First the landless white element in the Piedmont and coastal plain sections was drawn on for the needed labor force. It was their pitiable economic state that produced the urge to build cotton mills as a philanthropic act following the Civil War and it was from these teeming thousands of starving men, women, and children that the first recruits were drawn. It has been only comparatively recently, probably within the past two decades, that the southern cotton

manufacturer has broadened the scope of his potential labor force to include also the mountain people in the South.

LATER ACQUISITIONS

As to why the mountain people along with the former group have found their way into the mills no absolutely satisfactory answer can be made. Considering the fact that farm tenancy in each of these states has either increased or maintained a stationary level in each succeeding decade since 1880, it becomes readily apparent that the landless white element was by no means exhausted by the call of the mill for men. One possible explanation for the coming of the southern mountaineer into the cotton mill may be found in the relative productivity of the two groups concerned. Cotton manufacturers have often stated that the mountaineer makes a much more efficient laborer than the tenant farmer from the Piedmont hills even though it seems to be harder for him to adapt himself to mill village life and mill work and even though he is more likely to return to his mountain home than is the tenant farmer to his Piedmont hill. However, his greater efficiency, his superior capacity for hard work, and his rampant individualism all combined make of him probably the best worker to be found anywhere, according to statements from the manufacturers. Whether or not these estimates are true cannot be determined here, but the fact remains that the representatives of mills, of new mills especially, have scouted the mountain sections of North Carolina for workers. The extent to which this is sometimes done is illustrated by the activities of a certain mill organized in 1920. A representative of the mill journeyed to the mountains and spread the information that a new mill was being organized in..... ..... County. He pictured to the mountain folk the higher wages and easier living in the mill village as compared to that of their mountain homes, and as a result of his efforts, over one-half of the seventy or more company dwellings were occupied by newly arrived mountain families when the mill

began operations.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine as nearly as possible the sources of the labor supply for the mills in so far as those sources may be determined by a study of the origins and place of birth of the people living in the several representative mill villages selected. Whereas the preceding chapters have presented a picture of the mill worker's daily round of living and the evidences of the social process observable in mill villages as a whole or in several types of villages considered separately, from this point on we shall be concerned with the social and economic aspects of the life of the cotton mill worker and his family, and his attitudes toward life.

The factual data given in the present chapter represent the findings relative to the place of birth and the former occupations of the persons composing the 500 North Carolina cotton mill families already specified. In addition, a comparison is made of the former occupations of the parents of the heads of the families studied, the former occupation of the heads of families themselves, and the former occupation of single workers. This comparison should be of value in determining the extent to which the mills are drawing on new population groups for their labor supply. The same comparison is also significant for showing whether or not the cotton mill population is likely to develop a social type on account of a lack of new population groups, a lack of ready transfer from the mill to other occupations, or from other occupations to mill work.

BIRTHPLACE OF COTTON MILL WORKERS

The assertion that the labor personnel for southern cotton mills is drawn from native southern stock is strikingly demonstrated by the findings of the study. Of the 1,923 persons whose place of birth was ascertained as shown by Table I, 94 per cent were natives of the four southern states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee.

TABLE I

BIRTHPLACE BY STATES AND COUNTRIES

1,923 Persons in 500 Cotton Mill Families

	Number of Persons					
	Married Widowed or Deserted		Unmarried Six Years of Age and Over		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
North Carolina	635	68.1	730	73.7	1,365	70.98
South Carolina	175	18.8	175	17.6	350	18.21
Georgia	45	4.9	39	3.9	84	4.37
Tennessee	43	4.7	23	2.3	66	3.44
Virginia	10	1.1	8	.8	18	.94
Alabama	4	.5	8	.8	12	.63
Texas	2	.2	7	.7	9	.48
Louisiana	1	.1	1	.1	2	.10
Oklahoma	1	.1	1	.1	2	.10
Maryland	2	.2	..	..	2	.10
Pennsylvania	2	.2	..	..	2	.10
West Virginia	1	.1	..	..	1	.05
Florida	1	.1	..	..	1	.05
Kentucky	1	.1	..	..	1	.05
Illinois	1	.1	..	..	1	.05
Arizona	2	.2	..	..	2	.10
Arkansas	1	.1	..	..	1	.05
Rhode Island	1	.1	..	..	1	.50
Ohio	1	.1	..	..	1	.05
Indiana	1	.1	..	..	1	.05
Other Countries:						
Italy	1	.1	..	..	1	.50
Total	931	100.0	992	100.0	1,923	100.00

Furthermore, it is significant that only one individual was found who was born outside the United States. The worker of foreign extraction, who now composes a large percentage of the total labor force of the textile mills in the New England states, is hardly present in the southern mills. In the first place, there has probably been little incentive or desire on the part of the immigrant to come to the South in search of work, and in the second place, it is fairly evident

that the southern manufacturer is not eager to introduce into the South any foreign element which would likely cause increased problems, preferring to rely on the native southern white for the necessary labor.

Another significant fact demonstrated by the figures is that 1,365, or 70.98 per cent of the persons studied were born in North Carolina. This would further indicate the tendency of the employer to draw from the local labor supply. As further evidence of the localization of the source of the labor supply for these mills it should be added that about one-half of the 1,365 persons born in North Carolina were born in the county where the study was conducted. Moreover, if contiguous or adjoining counties be added to the above figure it will be found that about three-fourths of those born in North Carolina would be accounted for.

As a possible index of the extent to which the mills in the state are drawing upon the mountain folk for their labor supply, it is significant to note also the proportion of those having their birthplace in this state who were born in a mountain county. According to the data on birthplace by counties, approximately one-fifth of those born in North Carolina were born in the mountain section. If the number born in the county in which the study was conducted be deducted from the total and calculations made from the remainder, it will be found that approximately two-fifths were born in the mountain area. From whatever point of view the data may be considered, therefore, it is evident that a fairly considerable element of the labor force of North Carolina cotton mills is being drawn from the mountain region. Also, there is no doubt, as the figures amply demonstrate, that the counties in which the mills are concentrated are the chief sources of the labor supply. The area of secondary sources are the counties near or adjoining the industrial area while the greater the distance the less the demand on the potential labor force.

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY

A question of concern to many students of southern cotton mill problems relates to the past occupation of the present workers in these mills. What proportion of the workers have followed no other line of work, and what proportion have lived at least a part of their lives on the farm, or have been engaged in other lines of work?

It was to find some answer to these and similar questions that data were collected which showed the previous occupation of the family head in each of the 500 families studied. To secure more comprehensive figures which would also tend to show occupational shifting from one line of work to another, similar data were gathered concerning both the parents of these family heads and the unmarried workers in the families studied. Since the large majority of the unmarried workers were the children of the family heads studied it is apparent that the data collected from the three sources correspond roughly at least to three generations.

In order to show the relative proportions engaged in each occupation for each succeeding generation the data concerning the occupational history of the parents of the family heads have been introduced first. The large percentage that originally came from farms as shown in Table II, gives a clear indication of the extent to which the mills relied upon the farms to furnish their labor force. It should be observed that of those parents of present heads of families who were farmers, a larger percentage were farm owners than farm tenants. In fact, the proportion of farm tenants is less than would normally be expected. As will be indicated later, the percentage of farm tenants among the families studied tends to run higher than the above figures. Although their parents were farm owners, many of these young people were unable to purchase farms because of increased land values. Necessity thus forced them to become farm tenants.

In the next place, investigation was made concerning the former occupation of the present family heads now residing

in the mill villages. It was found that 256 or 51.2 per cent of the family heads had farmed before going to the mills, 38 per cent had always been engaged in their present work, while the remaining 11.8 per cent had followed a large number of occupational pursuits.

TABLE II

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS OF FAMILY HEADS

OCCUPATION	NUMBER	PER CENT
Farmers:	626	62.6
Owners	336	33.6
Tenants	290	29.0
Mill Operatives	181	18.1
Carpenters and Contractors	39	3.9
Merchants	23	2.3
Machinists	11	1.1
Mill Superintendents	8	.8
All Other Occupations	112	11.2
Total	1,000	100.0

While 62.6 per cent of the fathers of the present family heads were farmers, only 51.2 per cent of the present male heads of the families had farmed before coming to the mill. The first percentage indicates that although a larger number were born and reared on the farm, many left and went to the mills at maturity or at marriage. It may be concluded then that the cotton mills are drawing proportionately fewer farm families than formerly. The findings with respect to those having previously been engaged in mill work also tends to support this conclusion.

Table III shows that of 113 families having farmed before moving to the mill one-fourth had spent less than five years on the farm; over one-third, less than ten years; and almost three-fourths, less than twenty years. The mean number of years lived on the farm by the 113 families was 14.5.

TABLE III

YEARS LIVED ON FARM

113 Cotton Mill Families[1]

Number of Years	Number Families With Given Number of Years	Percentage of Families With Given Number of Years
Under 5	30	26.5
5 to 9	15	13.2
10 to 14	20	17.7
15 to 19	18	16.0
20 to 24	12	10.6
25 to 29	7	6.2
30 to 34	2	1.8
35 to 39	4	3.5
40 to 44	2	1.8
45 to 49	2	1.8
50 to 54	1	.9
Total	113	100.0

Information was also secured showing the number of farms on which each family had lived. As shown in Table IV, 38.4 per cent had lived on only one farm, while two families had resided on as many as twelve farms. Approximately a fourth of the families had resided on as many as five or more farms. The average number of farms each family had lived on was 2.98. The rate of mobility among this group while on the farm, as measured in terms of length of residence on any one farm, was 4.86 years. These figures are significant for comparison of mobility rates on farms and in mill villages and will be referred to later.

While no figures were secured in the study that would show the percentage of tenancy among these former farm families, the data collected would seem to indicate that the larger proportion had been farm tenants. Since farm tenancy is

[1]Difficulty was encountered in obtaining definite information as to the number of years lived on the farm and the number of farms lived on. In each case only those families who could furnish definite information on these two points, have been included.

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF FARMS LIVED ON

125 Cotton Mill Families

Number of Farms	Number of Families Living on Given Number of Farms	Percentage of Families Living on Given Number of Farms
1	48	38.4
2	19	15.2
3	18	14.4
4	10	8.0
5	13	10.4
6	6	4.8
7	4	3.2
8	5	4.0
Over 8	2	1.6
Total	125	100.0

usually conducive to mobility, this would be true especially of the 62.6 per cent that had lived on more than one farm.

Various reasons for leaving the farm were given. Economic conditions of one kind or another figured most frequently. Some left in search of better living conditions; "more pay" lured some away; others thought the mill offered a "better chance." Rented land featured in a large number of cases. One family head stated that "rented land" and "a big family" caused him to go to the cotton mill, so that "all the family could work." Death of the family head was found to be a frequent cause of the family's going to the mill. Left alone on the farm with the children, the mother could not cope with the battle against poverty. The cotton mill, since it furnished work for the children, seemed to offer a much better opportunity to such a family. A number of family heads stated that it was through the influence of relatives who had preceded them that they were induced to come to the cotton mill. Others "just wanted to try the work." The desire "for something new" served to lure many away from the farms. Bad crop years and the ravages of the boll weevil, causes in

themselves more real and more nearly fundamental than the desire for adventure, caused some to seek other work. One family head, a South Carolina farmer, who had been at the mill three years, stated, "The boll weevil ran me out of South Carolina." A few individuals gave the better school advantages to be had in the mill villages as the principal reason for leaving the farm and going to the mill.

Significant facts with regard to the length of time the workers had been engaged in their present work may be seen by referring to Table V. It may be observed that one-fifth of the families had been engaged in their present work for less than five years, and two-fifths less than 10 years, while 57.5 per cent of the families had been in their present work for less than fifteen years, and the remaining 42.5 per cent had been cotton mill families from fifteen to forty-four years. Only 1.1 per cent had been engaged in their present work for more than a thirty-five year period. The average number of years these families had been living at the mills was 13.45, the median 12.8 years, while the modal number of years was 10.85.

TABLE V

LENGTH OF TIME 452 COTTON MILL FAMILIES HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN THEIR PRESENT WORK

NUMBER OF YEARS	NUMBER OF FAMILIES IN EACH GIVEN GROUP OF YEARS	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES IN EACH GIVEN GROUP OF YEARS
Under 5	96	21.2
5 to 9	86	19.0
10 to 14	78	17.3
15 to 19	71	15.8
20 to 24	54	11.9
25 to 29	45	9.9
30 to 34	17	3.8
35 to 39	2	.4
40 to 44	3	.7
Total	452	100.0

It should be recalled that these figures concern the length of time that the male heads of the families studied had been

working in the mill. As will be pointed out later, the average age of the male heads of families was found to be 38.35 years. Considering average age and the average length of time the family heads had been in their present work, we find that they were 24.9 years of age on the average when they went to the cotton mills. Hence, the larger number of these cotton mill operatives are still relatively young, both in service and in age.

RECENT OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS

Classification was also made of the places of birth of the present family heads, of single workers, and of children from six to fourteen years of age. While only 18.1 per cent of the present heads of families were born in a cotton mill village, 30.9 per cent of the unmarried workers and 63.0 per cent of all children from six to fourteen years of age were born in a cotton mill village. It is therefore seen that in these three divisions, or general age groupings, representing only two generations, the percentage of persons now living in cotton mill villages who were born there increased from scarcely one-fifth in the case of the family heads to practically two-thirds in the case of children from six to fourteen.

In order to eliminate the chance for error due to the uneven age division when based on marital status, a rearrangement of the data was made solely on the basis of age. Eighteen per cent of those twenty years of age and over were born in a mill village, 43 per cent of those from fourteen to nineteen years of age, and 64 per cent of those from six to thirteen. Hence it may be observed that if the same rate of increase in the proportion of permanent mill population continues, the mills will soon become independent of their reserve of tenant farmers as sources of labor supply.

Even more significant in showing the same trend is the classification based on the former occupation of the parents of the present heads of families,[2] the male heads of the fam-

[2] Includes both men and women.

ilies studied, and of all unmarried workers. Three classifications were made on this basis: farmers, mill operatives, and those who had followed other occupations. According to this arrangement, 62.6 per cent of the parents of the heads of families[3] studied were farmers; 51.2 per cent of the family heads[4] had farmed before going to the mill; and only 27.8 per cent of the unmarried workers had farmed previous to entering cotton mill work. Although only 18.1 per cent of the parents of the family heads studied were cotton mill workers, 38.0 per cent of the male heads of these families and 70.8 per cent of the single workers,[5] males and females, had never followed any other occupation. In other words, the percentage of those occupied permanently in cotton mill work increased from 18.1 to 70.8 per cent in three generations. It is apparent also from these figures that if the present rate of increase is maintained for several generations, the cotton mill population of the state will be furnishing all the workers needed in the cotton mills and a sufficient number in addition to take care of any increased demand through the building of new mills.

Considered solely on a family basis, already two-fifths of the families studied have been cotton mill families from their origin. If the present trend is maintained for some years to come it is conceivable that North Carolina cotton mill workers, like industrial workers in the older and longer established industries, will begin to think and to feel as a class, if not to act as a unit. If and when that time does come, the possibility of the cotton mill village's fostering a social type will also be considerably augmented because of its homogeneous population. The question arises as to whether the cotton mill population may not become in time a hereditary occupational group.

[3] Including both sexes.

[4] Males only.

[5] Fourteen years was taken as the minimum age of each unmarried worker classified as to occupation.

CHAPTER IX

COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSEHOLD

A STUDY of the composition of the cotton mill family is of value on two counts. According to tradition the South is regarded as having a rather high birth rate. From census data, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the National Industrial Conference Board, and similar groups estimated the average American family to consist of about five persons. Will a representative sample of 500 show southern mill operatives to have larger or smaller families? Second, in order to arrive at a true conception of the economic status of the operative we must know whether he supports, on an average, one, two, or three dependents. Simply to estimate his average wage presents no adequate picture of the family income. Accordingly, this chapter will be concerned with the size of the family, the number of dependents per wage-earner, the number of wage-earners per family, and other factors which will throw light upon the earning capacity of the cotton mill family.

There were 2,362 persons in the 500 families studied, an average of 4.72 persons per family. The median number of persons per family was 4.9. Approximately one-third of the families had less than five persons. As shown in Table VI, the number of exceptionally large families was found to be comparatively small. Only two per cent had more than nine persons.

It should be mentioned that these figures include only those members of the family who were living in the home at the time the survey was made. Married children, those away from home, and persons listed as lodgers were excluded.

TABLE VI

SIZE OF FAMILIES

Number of Persons Per Family	Number of Families With Given Number of Persons	Percentage of Families With Given Number of Persons
2	66	13.2
3	97	19.4
4	96	19.2
5	84	16.8
6	54	10.8
7	53	10.6
8	24	4.8
9	16	3.2
10	7	1.4
11	2	0.4
12	1	0.2
Total	500	100.0

FAMILY DEPENDENCY

There were no dependent children[1] in 24.4 per cent of the families, one in 21.2 per cent, two in 21.6 per cent and three in 14.0 per cent as shown in Table VII. Only 18.8 per cent of the families had more than three dependent children. The average was 1.94 dependent children to the family.

A comparison of dependency in broken homes[2] with that in all families revealed a situation that may normally be expected in families where the earnings of the chief breadwinner have been cut off. As a rule fewer dependent children were found in the broken homes than among the whole group. There were no dependent children of any age in 59.5 per cent of the broken homes as compared to 24.4 per cent for all families. While only 9.5 per cent of the broken homes had three dependent children per family, 14 per cent of the entire group had as many as three dependent children per family.

[1] A dependent child as used here is any child under 14, or over 14 living with its parents and not employed.

[2] A broken home is here considered as any home where the male head of the family is dead or has deserted.

Table VII

DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN COTTON MILL FAMILIES

Number of Children	Number of Families Having Given Number of Dependent Children	Percentage of Families Having Given Number of Dependent Children
0	122	24.4
1	106	21.2
2	108	21.6
3	70	14.0
4	50	10.0
5	29	5.8
6	10	2.0
7	5	1.0
Total	500	100.0

Under the child labor law of North Carolina a child may go to work when he reaches his fourteenth birthday. Legally, therefore, absolute dependency in the case of children ceases at the age of fourteen. Considered on the basis of age it was found that in 85.6 per cent of the families there were no dependent children over fourteen, while in only two-tenths per cent of the cases was there more than one dependent child over fourteen. These figures would seem to indicate that the great majority of the children in mill families go to work as soon as they become fourteen. Frequently in cases where one dependent child over fourteen was listed the mother was a wage earner. In such cases the dependent, generally a girl, did the housekeeping, thus releasing the mother for employment in the mill.

A study was also made of the total number of dependents per family. These results are shown in Table VIII. Even though every person who was not actually working in the mill was considered dependent, 7.8 per cent of the families had no dependent member and 19.2 per cent had only one. There were less than three dependent members in 46.8 per cent of the families and six or more dependents in only 8.0 per cent. The average number of dependents per family was

2.98 and the median number of dependents was 3.14. As would be expected, a slightly higher percentage of broken homes than of the group as a whole had no dependents. In 11.9 per cent of these, there were no dependents as compared to 7.8 per cent in the case of all families. An even larger dif-

TABLE VIII

DEPENDENTS PER COTTON MILL FAMILY

Number of Dependents	Number of Families With Given Number of Dependents	Percentage of Families With Given Number of Dependents
0	39	7.8
1	96	19.2
2	99	19.8
3	112	22.4
4	68	13.6
5	46	9.2
6	26	5.2
7	9	1.8
8	5	1.0
Total	500	100.0

ference was noted in the percentage of families in the two groups having one dependent. While 19.2 per cent of the total group had one dependent, 52.3 per cent of families in the broken home group had but one dependent. These findings again point to less dependency in families deprived of the earnings of the father, thus indicating that necessity forces a relatively larger percentage of the members of such families into the wage-earning class.

A study of family dependency in home-owning families revealed that the average number of dependents per family was 2.96. This figure compares closely with the average of 2.98 dependent persons per family for the total group of 500 families. There were three dependents per family in 23.3 per cent of the home-owning families as compared with 22.4 per cent in the 500 families. How closely the dependency figures in the two cases agree may be further seen from the percent-

age of families having less than three dependent members per family. While 46.6 per cent of the home-owning families had less than three dependents, 46.8 per cent of all families had less than this number.

Of the 2,362 persons (exclusive of lodgers) in the 500 households, 58.9 per cent were dependent for support on some other member of the family. In other words, each one of the 971 workers had an average of 1.43 persons dependent on him for support. Counting only the total number of married and widowed males gainfully employed, and regarding all children under 14 years of age as legally dependent upon the father for support, we find that the 451 married or widowed males had dependent upon them 887 children under fourteen years of age or an average of 1.97 dependents per wage-earner. In addition to the 887 dependent children, there were 338 wives out of a total of 445 who were not gainfully employed and therefore dependent on the husband for support. There were, then, an average of 2.7 persons dependent upon

TABLE IX

DEPENDENT CHILDREN UNDER 14 PER MARRIED MALE WAGE-EARNER

Number of Children	Percentage of Married Male Wage-Earners Having Given No. of Dependent Children
0	23.8
1	23.3
2	22.1
3	13.6
4	9.9
5	5.4
6	1.3
7	0.6
Total	100.0

each married or widowed wage-earner. Other information on this point may be secured by referring to Table IX.

A study of dependency in relation to wage-earning mothers

is given in Table X. In 40.5 per cent of the families having wage-earning mothers there were no dependent children under fourteen years of age. This is a situation that may be normally expected. Mothers without dependent children have the greater opportunity to seek work outside the home.

Table X

DEPENDENT CHILDREN, UNDER 14, OF WAGE-EARNING MOTHERS

Number of Children	Number of Mothers With Given Number of Dependent Children	Percentage of Mothers With Given Number of Dependent Children
0	47	40.5
1	22	19.0
2	19	16.5
3	14	12.0
4	10	8.6
5	4	3.4
Total	116	100.0

WORKERS PER FAMILY

As may be inferred from the preceding data the cotton manufacturing industry tends to absorb all the available family labor force. Relatively few children over fourteen were found who were not working in the mill or else caring for younger brothers or sisters while the mother worked. Nevertheless a large number of families had only one wage-earner, thus indicating that a large proportion of cotton mill families do not have children over the legal working age and hence have to depend on the wages of the father alone. Analysis of the data revealed that practically one-half the families had only one wage-earner, slightly over one-fourth had two, while 23.8 per cent had three or more, as shown in Table XI.

There were 129 wage-earners in the 60 home-owning families. Of these 38.8 per cent were married males, 31.8 per cent single males, 24 per cent single females, 4.7 per cent married females, and 0.7 per cent widowed females. A higher

TABLE XI

NUMBER OF WORKERS PER FAMILY

Number of Workers	Number of Families With Given Number of Workers	Percentage of Families With Given Number of Workers
1	243	48.6
2	138	27.6
3	58	11.6
4	35	7.0
5	20	4.0
6	4	0.8
7	2	0.4
Total	500	100.0

average number of workers per family was noted in home-owning families than among the group as a whole. While there were 1.94 workers per family on an average among the 500 families, the average number among home-owning families was 2.15. The larger average number of workers to the family among home-owners may be partly accounted for through differences in ages of parents and partly because of the larger average size of home-owning families. The mean age of parents in the home-owning families was 42.7 years while the mean age for parents of all families was 35.8 years. Home-owning families also averaged 4.98 persons as compared to 4.72 persons per family in the whole group of 500 families.

A larger average number of workers per family was also found in families where the home had been broken by the death or the desertion of the male head of the family. The 42 families concerned had a total of 102 workers, or an average of 2.4 workers to the family as compared to 1.94 for all families. Such a situation may normally be expected for the reason that upon the death or desertion of the male head of the family it generally becomes necessary for all the children to help in supporting the family as soon as they are permitted by law.

Little idleness was noted among the fathers of the families studied. The male head of the family was gainfully employed in 96.7 per cent of the families where the father was still living. If these findings are typical for the industry in the state as a whole, the permanently idle father, or the "cotton mill drone," as he was popularly called several decades ago, who made his children support him while he spent his time in idleness, is a passing character.[3] Public opinion has probably done more than any other one factor to eliminate this type of parasitic creature.

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF WAGE-EARNERS

Of the 971 wage-earners in the families included in the study, 659 or 67.9 per cent were males and 312, or 32.1 per cent were females. In only 19 of the 500 families were there no male wage-earners as compared with one worker in practically three-fourths of the families. This is indicated in Table XII. The table shows very clearly the large proportion of cotton mill families that must depend for support on the wages of the father alone. Hardly one-fourth of the families were found to have as many as two male wage-earners.

There were 312 female wage-earners in the 500 families,

[3] One writer gives the following description of this type of character: "The cotton mill drone is a lazy lump of humanity who is void of either feeling or ambition. Such a man may be found slinking around localities where mills abound. The drone and work have parted company ever since his little children were able to work in the cotton mill, after which the drone's entire occupation is eating, sleeping, or smoking tobacco, together with the daily round of the store and the blacksmith shop, swapping lies with others that are as deep probably in the mud as our drone is in the mire. However, the lazy hound is full of excuses; he is always found to be sick, and as a rule is troubled with heart failure. Sometimes we have found the drone's nerves affected or he is disabled by corns or bunions. Indeed there is no disease in the calendar that this surplus part of our population does not fall back upon." Article in *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior* (Charlotte, N. C.: September, 1896); reprinted in *Report of the Commissioner of Labor and Printing* (Raleigh, N. C.: Dept. of Labor and Printing, 1896), pp. 61-62.

TABLE XII

NUMBER OF MALE WAGE-EARNERS PER FAMILY

Number of Male Wage-Earners	Number of Families With Given Number of Male Wage-Earners	Percentage of Families With Given Number of Male Wage-Earners
0	19	3.8
1	363	72.6
2	73	14.6
3	32	6.4
4	11	2.2
5	2	0.4
Total	500	100.0

or an average of 0.62 female wage-earners to the family. Women workers were found in only about three-fifths of the families, thus tending to show that among cotton mill families in general the women are no longer depended upon to supply the needed labor force to the extent that they were in the earlier days. Facts in regard to the number of women workers per family are shown in Table XIII. There were no female

TABLE XIII

NUMBER OF FEMALE WAGE-EARNERS PER FAMILY

Number of Female Wage-Earners	Number of Families With Given Number of Female Wage-Earners	Percentage of Families With Given Number of Female Wage-Earners
0	286	57.2
1	144	28.8
2	47	9.4
3	18	3.6
4	5	1.0
Total	500	100.0

wage-earners in 19 per cent of the broken homes, one in 50 per cent, two in 23.8 per cent, and three or four in 7.2 per cent. A much higher proportionate number of female wage-earners was found in this group of families than among the

500 families as a whole. While the 500 families had an average of only 0.6 female wage-earner per family there was for the broken homes an average of one female worker for each family. Practically the same proportionate number of female wage-earners were found among home owners as were found among the whole group. This situation tends to bear out a previous statement, that among home-owning families the wages of approximately the same number of persons are required for the support of the family as among families living in company houses.

MARITAL CONDITION OF WORKERS

Married males constituted the largest proportion of wage-earners; single males and females were second and third respectively. Of the 971 wage-earners studied, 45.1 per cent were married males, 21.5 per cent single males, 20 per cent single females, 11 per cent married females, and 1.2 per cent each of widowed or deserted males and females. Male workers, including single, married, and widowed males, thus constituted 659, or 67.9 per cent of the total number of workers. Of this number 544, or 82.5 per cent, were adult males twenty years old and over, 80.7 per cent were married, 17.1 per cent were single, and 2.2 per cent were widowed.[4]

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS

Ages were obtained from 893, or 91.6 per cent, of the wage-earners in the 500 households studied. As may be seen by reference to Table XIV a little over one-tenth of the workers were under sixteen years of age while approximately one-fourth were under twenty years of age. A relatively larger number of females than males were employed under

[4] The total number of employed single males was 308. Since practically all of the male workers from 14 to 19 years of age were single, the number of adult males 20 years of age and over who were single may be secured by subtracting the 115 male workers from 14 to 19 from the 308 single males. Based on this calculation 17.1 per cent of the adult male workers were unmarried.

twenty years of age. Of the 893 wage-earners from whom ages were obtained, 611 were males and 282 were females. Only 17.8 per cent of the males were under twenty as compared to 43.3 per cent of the females. Probably the principal

TABLE XIV

DISTRIBUTION OF 893 NORTH CAROLINA COTTON MILL WAGE-EARNERS BY AGE AND SEX

Ages of Workers	Per Cent		Total
	Males	Females	
14 years	1.9	3.2	2.4
15 years	1.8	7.8	3.7
16 years	3.3	7.8	4.7
17 years	3.5	9.2	5.3
18 and 19 years	7.4	15.3	9.8
20 to 24 years	15.5	23.4	18.0
25 to 44 years	51.2	28.0	43.9
45 to 64 years	13.6	5.3	11.0
65 and over	1.8	..	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

explanation of the tendency for more girls than boys to go into the cotton mills at this early age is to be found in the greater opportunity boys may have to secure work in other industries. The fact that there is a greater call for female labor in the spinning room may also partly account for the tendency. The great majority of workers, then, were found to be under middle age. Of the 893 workers of both sexes nearly one-half were under twenty-six years of age. The mean or average age of all male wage-earners was 32.2 years, the median age 30 years, and the modal age 25.8 years. The mean age of female workers was 24.2 years, the median age 21.6, and the modal 16.3. The mean, median, and modal ages for both sexes combined were 29.6 years, 27, and 21.8 years, respectively.

In order to determine the extent to which the age distribution of the workers in the families studied was typical of the age distribution of larger groups, a comparison of the age distribution of the 893 cotton mill workers studied was made

with the age distribution of the wage-earners in the cotton mills of North Carolina, Massachusetts, and the United States as given by the census for 1920. In Table XV the proportion of wage-earners in the 500 families studied is found to conform rather closely to similar age groupings for all wage-earners in cotton mills in the state. Massachusetts cotton mills in 1920 employed a somewhat larger proportion of workers over forty-five years of age than did North Carolina mills. Furthermore, it is observed that a smaller percentage of wage-earners over forty-five years of age were employed in North Carolina than in the United States as a whole.

TABLE XV[5]

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WAGE-EARNERS IN COTTON MILLS

AGE DISTRIBUTION IN YEARS	PERCENTAGE OF EACH GIVEN DISTRIBUTION			
	IN 500 N. C. COTTON MILL FAMILIES	NORTH CAROLINA	MASSACHUSETTS	UNITED STATES
10 to 13 years	..	0.3	0.1	0.2
14 years	2.4	2.9	2.6	2.2
15 years	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.4
16 years	4.7	6.8	4.6	5.6
17 years	5.3	6.0	4.0	5.1
18 and 19 years	9.8	11.6	7.6	9.6
20 to 24 years	18.0	21.3	16.7	18.8
25 to 44 years	43.9	35.3	42.6	39.3
45 to 64 years	11.0	10.4	16.1	14.1
65 and over	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

COMPARISON WITH AGE DISTRIBUTION IN OTHER INDUSTRIES

In order to throw further light upon the age distribution of cotton mill workers in North Carolina, a comparison was made between ages of workers in North Carolina cotton mills

[5] The percentages for North Carolina, Massachusetts, and the whole country are based on figures taken from *Census of Population*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), IV, Appendix A.

only, and the ages of persons engaged in all manufacturing and mechanical industries in North Carolina, in Massachusetts, and in the whole country. It will be seen from the figures given in Table XVI that a proportionately larger number of workers under twenty-five are employed in the cotton mills of the state than are employed in manufacturing and mechanical industries in general in either this state, in Massachusetts, or in the United States. The percentage of workers coming in the age group from 25 to 44 in the 500 families surveyed was approximately the same as the percentage of workers in this age group in North Carolina industries as a whole. The census figures for all wage-earners in the mills of North Carolina, on the other hand, showed 35.3 per cent to be in the age group from 25 to 44 as compared to 42.7 for the same age group in North Carolina industries as a whole.

An even more significant difference was found in comparing the ages of all wage-earners in North Carolina mills with all industries in Massachusetts and the entire country. An inspection of the table will show that the cotton mills of North Carolina employ a much larger percentage of workers below the age group of 25 to 44 than do industries as a whole in this state, in Massachusetts, or in the United States. While 52.8 per cent of all persons in the cotton mills of North Carolina in 1920 were under twenty-five, the percentage of persons under twenty-five engaged in all manufacturing and mechanical industries in that year was only 32.8 per cent in North Carolina, 26.9 per cent in Massachusetts, and 25.2 per cent in the whole country.

That the cotton mills in North Carolina do not employ as high a percentage of older workers as do industries in general is further seen by comparing cotton mill workers over forty-five with persons over forty-five in all manufacturing and mechanical industries. While only 11.9 per cent of all cotton mill workers in North Carolina in 1919 were over forty-five years of age, the percentage of persons over forty-five in all manufacturing and mechanical industries in the

TABLE XVI[6]

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS IN COTTON MILLS AND MANUFACTURING AND MECHANICAL INDUSTRIES IN GENERAL

Age Distribution	Percentage				
	Wage-Earners in Cotton Mills Only		All Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries		
	893 Workers	Total for North Carolina	North Carolina	Massachusetts	United States
10 to 13 years	..	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1
14 years	2.4	2.9	1.4	0.9	0.3
15 years	3.7	3.9	2.1	1.8	0.9
16 years	4.7	6.8	3.1	2.5	2.2
17 years	5.3	6.0	3.8	2.6	2.5
18 and 19 years	9.8	11.6	8.5	5.4	5.3
20 to 24 years	18.0	21.3	19.6	13.6	13.9
25 to 44 years	43.9	35.3	42.7	46.3	48.4
45 to 64 years	11.0	10.4	16.0	23.6	23.2
65 and over	1.2	1.5	2.5	3.2	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

same year was 18.5 per cent in North Carolina, 26.8 per cent in Massachusetts, and 26.4 per cent in the United States.

Any explanation of the tendency to employ younger persons in the cotton mills than in industries generally in North Carolina involves consideration of a number of factors. It might be contended that the speed of the machines, coupled with long hours, causes the workers to age prematurely, and that they are then discarded for younger workers who, as they grow older in the course of a few years, are in turn discarded for more suitable material and thus the vicious process is kept up. While there is doubtless an element of truth in this point of view, very few aged dependents are found in mill homes; there are other factors which have an important influence on the ages of workers employed in the cotton mills in North Carolina. One of these has to do with the age of

[6] *Ibid.*

the industry. Comparatively speaking, cotton manufacturing in North Carolina is still a young industry. For this reason fewer workers have had an opportunity to grow old in its service than in longer established industries. A large number of cotton mills have been put into operation in this state only within the last decade. The labor for these mills has been recruited principally from the younger tenant farmers in North Carolina and adjoining states. This would also tend to make the proportion of young persons employed larger. A third explanation may be found in the age at which the work offers the greatest appeal. Naturally the prospect of cotton mill work and the weekly pay envelope would appeal more potently to younger persons on the farm. Since younger people and the more detached persons generally are not bound by family ties and traditions to the extent that older people are, they break loose from their native surroundings with greater ease and facility.

On the basis of this representative sample of 500 families, several generalizations may be ventured. In the first place, it is fairly evident that the average wage-earner in the cotton mills of North Carolina does not have to support a family of five persons. The cotton mill seeks to utilize all the available family labor force as indicated by the fact that there was an average of 1.94 workers per family in families that only averaged 4.72 persons to the family. In other words, there was an average of one wage-earner to every 2.43 persons in the 500 families studied. A second possible generalization concerns the family in which the father was dead or had deserted. A larger proportion of wage-earning mothers were found in the homes deprived of the wages of the father than in the group as a whole. Fewer dependents were also found in these same families. These conditions would seem to indicate that actual necessity forces every available member of such families into the wage-earning class. A third inference that may be drawn from the data presented relates to the number of wage-earners in home-owning families compared to the whole

group of families studied. A larger average number of wage-earners per family (2.15) was noted in the home-owning families than among the group as a whole (1.94). If actual need determines the number of wage-earners per family the home-owning cotton mill family is in hardly as favorable circumstances as the family living in the company house. It is apparent that the nominal rental charge by the company is less than the investment and cost of upkeep of a home. Since the home-owning families were slightly larger than the group as a whole, the larger number of wage-earners in those families may be accounted for on this basis. To the extent that the owning of a home tends to tie a family to a particular locality, an additional disadvantage lies in the worker's inability to take advantage of opportunities for work in different localities.

An additional finding of the survey was the unusually large proportion of the total wage-earners who were yet comparatively young. By far the large majority were under thirty years of age, thus tending to show that the cotton mill, itself comparatively young, either presents a stronger appeal to youth, or that the nature of the work demands the strength and agility of youth.

CHAPTER X

WAGES

Since the southern cotton mill tends to absorb all of the available family labor force, as was found in the preceding chapter, a study of wages should include not only a consideration of the individual wage but the total family income as well. This is true especially in view of the fact that the total income of the family directly influences the standard of living. Hence, in addition to a study of individual wages, a portion of the present chapter is devoted to a consideration of the total income per family. Since the small charges for house rent, wholesale prices on coal, and industrial welfare work form a part of the real wage of the southern cotton mill worker, these items are also given brief consideration in this chapter.

GENERAL WAGE DISTRIBUTION

The lowest paid wage-earner in the 500 families studied[1] received only seven dollars per week. The highest paid wage-earner, on the other hand, received $37 per week. It is ap-

[1] Data for this chapter are based on reports given by wage-earners themselves and only apply to regular working conditions. The pay-rolls of the different corporations concerned were not available for checking the accuracy of the statements given. Because of the more or less frequent change of jobs, it would have been impracticable to follow up each worker for any length of time in the effort to determine from official records the wage each had actually received. Comparisons with other studies would seem to indicate that the data obtained are fairly reliable. Further, since there was no way of obtaining the amount of time each worker had lost during the preceding year because of seasonal employment, recourse was taken to the *Report of the North Carolina Commissioner of Labor and Printing* (1925) in ascertaining the amount of time lost through shut-down of plants.

parent from these figures that a wide variation exists in the rate of wages paid cotton mill workers in North Carolina. Those receiving the lowest wages were generally beginners or older men no longer capable of holding a skilled job. Specifically, the lowest wages were paid sweepers, spoolers, or doffers working only part time. Those receiving the highest wages were loom fixers and weavers.

The average weekly wage received by all wage-earners was $15.72, the median wage was $15.14, and the modal wage was $13.40. The low modal wage indicates the low wage received by a very large portion of cotton mill workers in the state. Males were generally paid a higher wage than females. The average weekly wage was $16.67 for males and $13.58 for females. This difference is to be partly accounted for on the basis of the greater proportion of skilled jobs open to men. In those jobs where both sexes were employed, as for

TABLE XVII

WEEKLY WAGE OF COTTON MILL WORKERS
(In 500 Families)

Weekly Wages in Dollars	Percentage of Workers of Each Sex and Both Sexes Combined in Each Given Wage Interval		
	Males	Females	Both Sexes
5 to 7	0.2	3.8	1.4
8 to 10	2.6	13.2	5.9
11 to 13	26.0	43.9	31.5
14 to 16	32.0	23.7	29.4
17 to 19	18.3	12.1	16.3
20 to 22	14.1	3.3	10.8
23 to 25	4.6	..	3.2
26 to 28	1.2	..	0.9
29 to 31	0.5	..	0.3
32 to 34	..	..	..
35 to 37	0.5	..	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

example in weaving, very little difference was found in the wages paid. As may be observed by referring to the statistics

of Table XVII, 17 per cent of the female wage-earners were receiving less than $11 per week as compared to 2.8 per cent of the male wage-earners. Further, 60.9 per cent of the women and 28.8 per cent of the men were receiving less than $14 per week. The highest-paid women were receiving $22 per week. That the great majority of the men were also receiving a fairly low wage is seen from the fact that only 6.8 per cent were receiving more than $22 per week.

If only time lost through the actual shut-down of plants be considered and the annual wage of cotton mill operatives be determined from the average wage for the 45½ weeks[2] the plants were actually in operation throughout the year, we find that the average annual wage of cotton mill workers included in the study was $715.06.

A comparison of these results with the results of a study of wages in the leading cotton manufacturing states of the South and in New England should be of interest. Based on information received from the Department of Commerce reports, the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers found that the average wage paid cotton mill operatives in Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina was $644 in 1923, and $1,025 in Massachusetts and Rhode Island for the same year.[3] In other words, wages paid in the four leading cotton manufacturing states in the South were 37 per cent below the wages paid in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

If time be counted out for temporary lay-offs and sickness of workers, the average wage of $715 in the case of the 500 families would probably be found to harmonize even more closely with the average wage paid in the leading southern states in 1923. At any rate the figures in the two cases agree sufficiently to show that the findings for the 500 families are apparently representative of the state as a whole.

The discrepancy between the wages of New England cotton mill workers and cotton mill workers in the South may

[2] From *Report of N. C. Commissioner of Labor and Printing* (1925).
[3] R. W. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

be further seen from the following figures. A study of wages paid in cotton mills in Massachusetts and in five southern states made by the Bureau of Labor and Industries of the state of Massachusetts showed that in 1922 the average hourly earnings of employees in Massachusetts cotton mills were $0.409 as compared to $0.325 in the cotton mills in Virginia, $0.292 in the mills of North Carolina, $0.24 in the Georgia mills, $0.229 in the mills of South Carolina, and $0.21 in the mills in Alabama.[4]

INCOME PER FAMILY

The lowest weekly income per family in the 500 families studied was $10. In 11.7 per cent of the cases the family income was less than $15 per week. The income of 31.4 per cent of the families was less than $20 per week and less than $25 per week in 48.4 per cent of the cases. In 67 per cent of the families the family income was less than $30 per week. The remaining 33 per cent of the families had incomes ranging from $30 to $85 per week. In those cases of large family income, several persons were contributing to the upkeep of the family. A percentage distribution of the weekly income per family is given in Table XVIII.

The average weekly income per family was $28.65, the median $25.43, and the modal $16.07. Not considering time lost through unemployment, sickness, and shut-downs, and calculating the annual income from the average weekly income, the average family income of the 500 cotton mill families studied was $1,489.80. This amount would be equivalent to a daily income of $4.08 per family, or $0.87 for each person.[5] Considering the amount of time lost through shut-down

[4] *Report of a Special Investigation into the Conditions in the Textile Industry in Massachusetts and Southern States* (Boston: Mass. Department of Labor and Industries, 1923), p. 5. This investigation covered the wages of 46,139 employees in 72 cotton mills in Massachusetts and five southern states. The number of mills in which the study was conducted were: Massachusetts, 14; North Carolina, 21; South Carolina, 19; Georgia, 9; Alabama, 6, and Virginia, 3.

[5] Counting 4.72 persons to the family.

TABLE XVIII

WEEKLY INCOME PER COTTON MILL FAMILY

(In 500 Families)

AMOUNT IN DOLLARS	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WITH GIVEN INCOME PER WEEK
10 to 14	11.7
15 to 19	19.7
20 to 24	17.0
25 to 29	18.6
30 to 34	7.4
35 to 39	7.4
40 to 44	3.2
45 to 49	3.7
50 to 54	3.2
55 to 59	2.6
60 to 64	0.6
65 to 69	1.1
70 to 74	1.1
75 to 79	1.1
80 to 84	1.6
Total	100.0

of plants, the annual income per family was found to be $1,313.58. This would be equivalent to a daily income per family of $3.60, or $0.78 for each person.

When based on the average annual wage of $644 computed by the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers for 1923 it was found that each person in the 500 families would receive a daily income of $0.74 per day. If the time lost annually by individuals and families because of temporary unemployment, sickness, moving, and other causes could be computed, it is probable that the difference of four cents in the daily income of each individual between the figures secured from the workers in the families surveyed and the wage reported by the manufacturers' association would be practically eliminated.

Since the labor supply for the cotton mills of North Carolina has been recruited principally from the tenant farms of this and adjoining states, a comparison of the income of

cotton mill families and tenant farm families should determine whether or not the tenant families that have left the farms and have gone to the mills have improved their economic status. A study of the income of white tenant and cropper families in Chatham County, North Carolina in 1922 showed that the average daily money income for each person in the families studied was only fourteen cents for tenant and only eight cents for cropper families.[6] A similar study of white tenant and cropper families in a North Carolina mountain county in 1922 showed a situation even worse than that found among the landless farmers in Chatham County. The daily money income for white tenant and cropper families was only nine cents for each person.[7]

If the statistics given on incomes of cotton mill and landless farm families are true of conditions generally, the family at the cotton mill is in much better financial condition than the tenant farmer family. Granted that wages paid North Carolina cotton mill wage-earners are not as high as wages paid for the same work in New England, it is evident that as a rule a tenant farm family has the opportunity of materially improving its economic status by moving to the cotton mill. Accordingly the complacent attitude of the southern cotton mill worker in the past toward his lower wage may perhaps be explained by the worker's realization that after all he is considerably better off than if he had remained on his small tenant farm, or should he have to return to that life. It is perhaps true that the worker realizes that the role of the tenant farmer is about the only alternative he possesses in the matter of securing a livelihood as long as he remains in a section having but one highly developed industry.

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[6] E. C. Branson and J. A. Dickey, "How Farm Tenants Live in Mid-State Carolina,' in *N. C. Club Year Book,* "Home and Farm Ownership" (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Extension Division, 1922), p. 69.

[7] C. C. Taylor and C. C. Zimmerman, *Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers* (Raleigh, N. C.: State Dept. of Agriculture, 1922), p. 27.

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CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF WAGES AND INCOME

Since the study of family income revealed such wide variation between families, a portion of the chapter will be devoted to studies of individual family incomes in order to bring out the differences in actual income per person in those families having only one wage-earner and in those families having several wage-earners. The names of course are fictitious.

The Bowen family is composed of nine persons including father, mother, and seven children. The father, a bander, earning $13 per week under steady working conditions, is the only regular worker in the family. The mother keeps house. One boy, 17 years of age and a ninth grade student, works as a doffer in the mill during the vacation season. The other six children, including three boys and three girls, range in age from 14 down. Two are under six. Five are in school, three of whom are retarded one or more years. The ages of the father and mother are 45 and 42 respectively. Mr. Bowen had reached the eighth and Mrs. Bowen the seventh grade when they stopped school. The family has moved three times in the past eight years. The father has been engaged in cotton mill work for the past 12 years. Earlier in life he was a farmer and still owns a small farm, which yields practically no income above the payment of the taxes. He prefers to return to the farm but because of better school advantages to be had at the mill has decided to remain in cotton mill work.

The Downs family is composed of eight persons, father, mother, and six children. Mr. Downs is a weaver and earns $14 a week with regular work. The mother keeps house. Children range in ages from eleven years down to six months. Two are in school, both of whom are retarded one or more years. Mr. Downs is illiterate, while Mrs. Downs had reached the fourth grade when she stopped school. The family has no support other than the earnings of the father who has been a cotton mill operative for 25 years. He is 38 and his wife 34 years of age. The family has moved five times in the past 16 years. If no time were lost because of unemployment, sickness, or moving the daily income of this family would amount to twenty-five cents for each person.

The Jones family, composed of six persons, has a weekly income of $12, or thirty-three cents a day for each person, provided no time is lost through unemployment, sickness, or otherwise. The father is the only wage-earner in the family. The mother keeps house. Children range in age from 13 down. Two are in school, both of whom are retarded two years.

The Corbin family has seven persons, father, mother, and five children. All but Mrs. Corbin are wage-earners. The combined earnings

of the six wage-earners amount to $80 a week, or $13.33 per person per week. The father, a son, and a daughter each works in the cloth room. Their weekly wages are $12, $11, and $10, respectively. One son, a second-hand, makes $18 a week, and another, a bander, also has a weekly wage of $18. The other worker, a girl, makes $11 a week at creeling.

The Perkins family is composed of eight persons, six of whom are wage-earners, each making $12 per week. The father, 58 years of age, and one son, 29, are sweepers. Three other sons are doffers, while the remaining wage-earner, a girl, is a spinner.[8] Every worker in this family is doing a low grade of unskilled labor and is paid accordingly. In all likelihood the family is of low mentality, if not actually feeble-minded. It should be noted that such instances as this one are quite frequently found among persons or families who have been engaged in cotton mill work for a number of years. The more unskilled jobs are by no means all taken by the recruits from the farms. Whether or not failure to rise is due to feeble-mindedness, it is nevertheless true that there are a large number of persons in cotton mills who have never advanced as high as a semi-skilled job.

The Brown family of six persons, five of whom are wage-earners, has a total weekly income of $56 per week, or $11.20 per person. The whole family is illiterate. Every member of this family also, as the wage indicates, is doing a low grade of work. Mr. Brown states that he is well satisfied with his present work and that he prefers to continue in cotton mill work rather than to go back to the farm. The family has moved six times in three years, an average of one change of residence every six months.

REAL WAGES

Since there is no uniformity of expenditure among mills for the numerous forms of industrial welfare work, it is apparent that the actual value to each worker of such facilities cannot be established. While some cotton manufacturers go to the expense of providing an elaborate system of industrial welfare work, there are others who do nothing of the sort.

The one item that may be said to approach uniformity is

[8] Where it has not been taken over by Negro labor, sweeping is usually done by old men no longer useful in those jobs calling for speed and nimbleness of fingers. Male beginners, furthermore, are most frequently put to doffing, while females frequently start in the spinning room.

the rental charge for company houses. Throughout the South this charge usually amounts to twenty-five cents per room per week, or four dollars per month for a four-room house.[9] However, on account of the wide variation in structure and general housing conveniences among the cotton mill villages of the state, the so-called uniform rental charge becomes anything but uniform when translated in terms of actual conveniences supplied. Whereas the houses in some villages are equipped with electric lights and running water, the houses in other villages lack such conveniences. While in some villages all of the houses are new or kept in good repair, the houses in others are old and in poor condition. Thus it is apparent that the actual value of or the saving realized by the wage-earner living in a company house varies with the house or with the village. Therefore, the general statement cannot be made that every wage-earner in the cotton mills of North Carolina living in a company house receives an actual wage equivalent to his monetary wage plus the average value of industrial welfare work. Furthermore, since mills having welfare work usually make an effort to secure a stable group of families, the drifting element of the cotton mill population is able to get work more readily in those mills that do not have welfare work. The real wages of the floating cotton mill population for this reason would probably be lower than the real wages of the more stable element of the cotton mill population.

At least one attempt has been made to determine the total value to the worker of the nominal charge for house rent and the value of industrial welfare work. A recent study by the American Cotton Manufacturers' Association, a southern organization, estimated the value of nominal charges for rent, water, and lights, wholesale prices on coal, and of industrial welfare work to be equivalent to $4.36 per worker per week. This figure, in all likelihood, is higher than the actual average for North Carolina mills, since the mills on which the figure

[9] Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

was based are representative only of the more modern group. The mills considered were not representative of that group of North Carolina plants which is practically inactive in the establishment of industrial welfare systems.

In addition to welfare work, there are the probable lower price levels and lower costs of living in general in North Carolina mill towns which would tend to affect real wages. On account of lack of information on price levels in North Carolina cities and towns, comparisons with price levels in the New England textile cities were not practicable. For, even though identical budgets might cost as much in the southern mill village, actual budgets are affected by differences in the habits of the people in matters of food and clothes. If the southern mill operative wears cotton clothing almost exclusively at his work, if he gets a good share of his carbohydrates from corn bread and sweet potatoes instead of white bread and cheese, his vitamines from collards and turnip greens, peddled in the village by a neighboring farmer, instead of from dairy milk and oranges, his wage goes further in actual practice than an ideal budget might indicate it would. However, there are certain other factors that may offset these possible advantages. For example, when this study was made, North Carolina had no form of social insurance in case of industrial accident, occupational disease, or death due to injury or disease acquired in the course of the occupation, while the New England textile states had enacted such laws.[10] But this situation is not peculiar to North Carolina but maintains, to a great extent, throughout the South, being due largely to the later industrialization of this area. These factors, since they directly affect the standard of living of certain families and serve as a protection to the worker in case of accident, should be taken into consideration when estimating real wages.

After making every allowance for welfare work and dif-

[10] Since this study was made, the North Carolina legislature enacted a workmen's compensation law in March, 1929.

ferences in living costs, it can hardly be claimed that wages paid in the cotton mills in the South are the equivalent of wages paid in New England mills. If to the annual wage of $644 the amount of $4.36 per worker per week be added as the equivalent of reduced rental charges and all the forms of industrial welfare work, the total annual wage would then amount to only $870.20, which is still 15 per cent below the annual wage in Massachusetts and Rhode Island in 1923.[11]

While wages paid southern cotton mill workers are lower than wages paid in New England, those wages still represent an appreciable advance over the economic conditions of the landless farmer living in the same locality as shown earlier in the chapter. All his disabilities considered, the North Carolina mill worker has raised his economic status over that of his brother on the tenant farm.

[11] Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

CHAPTER XI

FAMILY MOBILITY

Frequent moves from one village to another and frequent changes of jobs are considered characteristics of mill village population. High labor turnover has in instances proved costly to employers, and many estimates have been made of high mobility rates among mill workers. The background of farm tenancy, the industrial housing program of mills, poor working conditions, and inherent shiftlessness have been pointed out as conducive to mobility. As a matter of fact, however, few studies have been made and very little is actually known as to the amount of shifting from one mill to another.

Accordingly, as an index to the stability or instability of the cotton mill worker, an attempt has been made to measure the rate of mobility and to determine the circumstances bearing upon excessive moving of the cotton mill family. For purposes of definition, a move or a change of residence is considered as a change of residence from one mill village to another. It does not include a change of residence in the same mill village. When considered solely from the standpoint of the wage-earner in a family, a move or a change of residence involves a change of work from one mill to another and therefore constitutes a case of labor turnover. Hence, only when considered in terms of the number of workers per family does family mobility become in any sense a measure of labor turnover.

RATE OF MOBILITY

The most feasible basis on which to compute the rate of mobility seemed to lie in including the total number of changes of residence each family had made since its origin, or since

marriage. Since this arrangement involved a different period of years in the case of each family, the rate of mobility of each family had to be reduced to a common denominator. Ten years was taken as the base on which to compute the rate of mobility, and the rate of each family was then adjusted accordingly. In other words, the family that had moved eight times in four years had a mobility rate of twenty moves based on the ten-year period; while a family that had moved only six times in twelve years, on the other hand, had a mobility rate of five for any ten-year period.

Table XIX, which shows the rate of mobility based on a ten-year period, reveals the wide range in the moving habits of different families. Families having a mobility rate of less than five moves in ten years, or an average length of residence covering more than a two-year period, comprised 61.4 per cent of all families studied. Families having an average length of residence of more than one year composed 78.4 per cent of the total. These figures indicate that the majority of cotton mill families do not change their place of residence frequently. While the indications are true for the majority, there is nevertheless an element of drifting cotton mill families having a high mobility rate. Families having an average length of residence of one year or less comprised 22.6 per cent of the total. Families moving at the rate of from ten to fourteen times in ten years composed 10.8 per cent of the total number of families. Six families had a mobility rate as high as from three to three and one-half moves a year, two from three and one-half to four, two from four and one-half to five, and three from six to six and one-half moves a year. One family was found with a mobility rate of ten per year, or one move every 1.2 months.

By measuring the rate of mobility of these families in terms of the cumulative frequency, it was observed that 79.0 per cent of the families moved at the rate of one or more times in ten years; 67.4 per cent, two or more times; and 38.6 per cent more than four times in ten years. Families moving more often

TABLE XIX

FAMILY MOBILITY

(Showing Rate for Ten Year Period)

NUMBER OF MOVES	NUMBER OF FAMILIES HAVING GIVEN NUMBER OF MOVES	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES HAVING GIVEN NUMBER OF MOVES
0	105	21.0
1	58	11.6
2	43	8.6
3	71	14.2
4	30	6.0
5	13	2.6
6	57	11.4
7	5	1.0
8	7	1.4
9	3	0.6
10- 14	54	10.8
15- 19	16	3.2
20- 24	20	4.0
25- 29	4	0.8
30- 34	6	1.2
35- 39	2	0.4
40- 44	..	..
45- 49	2	0.4
50- 54	..	..
55- 59	..	..
60- 64	3	0.6
100-104	1	0.2
Total	500	100.0

than once a year comprised 21.6 per cent of the total, while 7.6 per cent moved at the rate of more than twice every year.

COMRARATIVE RATES OF MOBILITY AMONG HOME-OWNING AND TENANT FAMILIES

Analysis of the data in Table XX reveals that the mobility rate among home-owning families is considerably lower than among tenant families. Since the owning of a home tends to tie a person or a family to a particular locality, home-owning families would naturally have a lower rate of mobility. Con-

versely, the floating type of family, possessed with the tendency to move frequently, probably has no desire to own a home. It is observed that 16.7 per cent of the tenant families had not moved during the period under consideration as compared to 53.3 per cent of the home owners. Eighty-five per cent of the home-owning families moved less than three times

TABLE XX

FAMILY MOBILITY—HOME-OWNING AND TENANT FAMILIES COMPARED

(In Terms of Ten Year Period)

Number of Moves	Number of Families Having Given Number of Moves		Percentage of Families Having Given No. of Moves	
	Tenants	Home Owners	Tenants	Home Owners
0	73	32	16.7	53.3
1	45	13	10.3	21.7
2	37	6	8.5	10.0
3	68	3	15.5	5.0
4	30	..	6.8	..
5	13	..	2.9	..
6	55	2	12.5	3.3
7	5	..	1.1	..
8	7	..	1.6	..
9	2	1	0.4	1.7
10- 14	52	2	11.8	3.3
15- 19	15	1	3.4	1.7
20- 24	20	..	4.6	..
25- 29	4	..	0.9	..
30- 34	6	..	1.4	..
35- 39	2	..	0.4	..
40- 44	..	..	..	..
45- 49	2	..	0.4	..
50- 54	..	..	..	..
55- 59	..	..	..	..
60- 64	3	..	0.6	..
100-104	1	..	0.2	..
Total	440	60	100.0	100.0

in ten years, as compared to 35.3 per cent of the tenant families. No families in the group of home owners had a mobility

rate as high as twenty moves or more in ten years, while 8.5 per cent of the tenant families showed this rate. It should also be noted that of the 60 home owners studied the mobility rates of four were affected by the inclusion of a period during which the families were living in rented dwellings.

MOBILITY RATES IN DIFFERENT VILLAGES

A study of mobility by villages revealed striking differences in the rates in the five villages studied. By referring to Table XXI it will be observed that the percentage of families not having moved in the period under consideration varied from 2.4 to 27.8 per cent. Even greater contrasts were noted for families having a rate of one residence change every ten years. The percentages ranged from 2.3 to 46.3 in this instance. Calculated on the basis of the cumulative frequency, the percentage of differences existing were found to vary to a marked degree. While 51.3 per cent of the families in one village were found to have moved at the rate of two or more times in a given ten-year period, 93.7 per cent of the families in another group showed this same mobility rate. Families moving at the rate of five times every ten years ranged from 9.8 per cent to 68.7 per cent. Whereas in one village only 1.2 per cent of the families were found to have a mobility rate as high as seven moves in a ten-year period, 56.2 per cent of the families in another village moved at this rate. Furthermore, while there were no families in one village having a mobility rate as high as 25 moves in a ten-year period, 12.6 per cent of the families in a second village had moved at this rate. Finally, even though there were no families in the one village that had a mobility rate as high as 25 for a ten-year period, the maximum rate for the same period for the other four villages was 35, 39, 64, and 104, respectively.

There are probably several pertinent factors that cause marked differences in mobility rates among different cotton mill villages. Home ownership has already been referred to as a factor making for variable mobility rates. The sixty home

TABLE XXI

COMPARATIVE RATES OF FAMILY MOBILITY IN FIVE COTTON MILL VILLAGES

(Based on Rate in Any Ten Year Period)

Number of Moves	Number of Families Having Given Rate in Each Village					Percentage of Families Having Given Rate in Each Village				
	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V
0	55	25	2	21	2	25.5	27.8	2.4	26.3	6.3
1	13	2	38	5	..	6.0	2.3	46.3	6.2	..
2	15	3	16	6	3	7.0	3.3	19.5	7.5	9.4
3	26	17	15	12	1	12.0	18.9	18.3	15.0	3.1
4	10	4	3	9	4	4.7	4.5	3.7	11.3	12.5
5	10	1	..	2	..	4.7	1.0	..	2.5	..
6	26	12	7	8	4	12.0	13.3	8.6	10.0	12.5
7	4	..	..	..	1	1.9	..	..	..	3.1
8	5	..	..	1	1	2.3	..	..	1.2	3.1
9	1	1	..	..	1	0.4	1.0	..	..	3.1
10- 14	28	11	..	9	6	12.9	12.2	..	11.3	18.7
15- 19	7	3	..	2	4	3.2	3.3	..	2.5	12.5
20- 24	9	7	1	2	1	4.1	7.8	1.2	2.5	3.1
25- 29	..	2	..	..	2	..	2.3	..	..	6.3
30- 34	3	2	..	1	..	1.4	2.3	..	1.2	..
35- 39	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	6.3
40- 44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
45- 49	2	..	..	..	..	0.9	..	..	..	..
50- 54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
55- 59	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
60- 64	1	..	..	2	..	0.5	..	..	2.5	..
100-104	1	..	..	..	..	0.5	..	..	..	..
Total	216	90	82	80	32	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

owners included in the survey were in two mill villages. All families in the three remaining villages were living in company houses. In one of the two villages containing the home-owning families, home owners composed 21.9 per cent of all the families studied; while in the other village 19.4 per cent of the families studied were home owners. The mill village containing the highest percentage of home owners was the village having the lowest mobility rate, while in the villages having the highest rate every family was living in a company-

owned house. The differences in the rates for the other three villages were so slight as to be practically negligible.

Another probable cause for the varying rate of mobility has to do with the location of the villages. Undoubtedly proximity to other mill villages tends to increase mobility for the same reason that isolation may retard frequent change of residence. Of the two villages showing the highest and lowest rates of mobility the preceding inference holds true. Though located in a rural section, the village having the highest rate is within an immediate area of intensive textile development. There are three large cotton mill towns within a radius of five miles. The village with the lowest rate of mobility, on the contrary, is not located within the immediate area of a highly developed industry of any type.

Apparently, a third cause for the differences noted concerns the length of time the different villages have been built. The newer villages had the higher rate of mobility partly because they have not had sufficient time to accumulate as stable a group of families as had the other villages.

COMPARATIVE RATES OF MOBILITY AMONG MILL VILLAGES IN A COTTON MILL TOWN

In addition to the variation in the rate of mobility between different mill communities, striking differences in mobility rates were noted between mill villages within the same cotton mill town. A study was made of mobility in three villages of one cotton mill town from which a portion of the five hundred families was taken. The results of this study may be seen by referring to Table XXII.

Families that had not changed their place of residence varied from 7.8 per cent to 25.0 per cent in the villages under consideration. The percentage of families moving once in ten years ranged from 3.1 to 11.4, while those having a rate of two moves in the same period ranged from 3.8 per cent to 13.7 per cent. Families moving at a rate of one or more times every ten years constituted 75.0, 90.8, and 92.2 per cent of each

TABLE XXII

COMPARATIVE MOBILITY RATES OF THREE VILLAGES IN A COTTON MILL TOWN

Rate in Moves	Number of Families			Percentage of Families		
	Villages			Villages		
	I	II	III	I	II	III
0	5	4	13	7.8	9.2	25.0
1	2	5	3	3.1	11.4	5.8
2	3	6	2	4.7	13.7	3.8
3	10	5	11	15.7	11.4	21.1
4	..	4	2	..	9.2	3.8
5	7	2	..	11.0	4.5	..
6	7	5	8	11.0	11.4	15.4
7	1	1	2	1.5	2.2	3.8
8	2	2	..	3.1	4.5	..
9	..	..	..	..	..	..
10- 14	14	5	5	21.9	11.4	9.8
15- 19	5	1	1	7.8	2.2	1.9
20- 24	3	2	4	4.7	4.5	7.7
25- 29	1	..	..	1.5	..	..
30- 34	2	1	..	3.1	2.2	..
35- 39	..	..	..	..	..	..
40- 44	..	..	..	..	..	..
45- 49	2	..	..	3.1	..	..
50- 54	..	..	..	..	..	..
55- 59	..	..	..	..	..	..
60- 64	..	..	1	..	..	1.9
100-104	..	1	..	..	2.2	..
Total	64	44	52	100.0	100.0	100.0

group, respectively, while those having a rate of two or more moves in ten years ranged from 69.2 per cent to 89.1 per cent. Those families that had a mobility rate less than one move every two years varied from 44.3 to 68.7 per cent, while the percentage of families having a rate of one change of residence a year or less ranged from 21.3 to 42.1 per cent in the two villages showing the highest and lowest rates.

The mobility rates of the different villages varied to such an extent that they are hardly explainable upon the basis of chance. A possible cause of these differences, as noted in the

preceding section, may lie in the differences in the ages of the villages. The village having the highest rate has been built for a relatively shorter period of time than the other two and consequently would tend to have a smaller number of settled residents. The other two mills on the contrary, having been in operation for approximately 25 and 30 years, respectively, have had sufficient time in which to attract a larger number of more or less permanent operatives who prefer to work at those mills and be able to live in the villages in question. A second explanation may be found in the location within the town of each of the villages concerned. Whereas neither of the two villages having the lower rate of mobility is separated from the other sections of the town, the village with the highest rate of mobility is definitely set off from any other part of the town and in many respects, barring the absence of schools and churches, bears the marks of a segregated mill village.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHANGES OF RESIDENCE

A study of the total number of moves was made for 355 of the 500 families surveyed. In most of the cases the information represents the total number of residence changes since the marriage of the parents or since the family moved to the cotton mill. The statistics for each family, therefore, represent different period lengths, and hence do not measure the rate of mobility. Only when the total number of moves is considered in terms of the years involved can any approach be made toward the measurement of the actual length of residence. The following data show the unusually large number of times some of these families had moved as compared to other families.

By referring to Table XXIII, it will be seen that 77 families of the 355, or 21.7 per cent, had never changed their place of residence, 26.5 per cent had moved only once, 15.2 per cent twice, 9.9 per cent three, and 5.0 per cent four times. Thus 78.3 per cent had moved less than five times in their history. Families were found, on the other hand, who not

TABLE XXIII

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHANGES OF RESIDENCE MADE BY 355 COTTON MILL FAMILIES

MOVES	NUMBER OF FAMILIES IN EACH NUMBER OF MOVES	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES IN EACH NUMBER OF MOVES
0	77	21.7
1	94	26.5
2	54	15.2
3	35	9.9
4	18	5.0
5	22	6.2
6	14	3.9
7	2	0.6
8	7	1.9
9	9	2.5
10	3	0.8
11	2	0.6
12	4	1.1
13	5	1.5
14	..	..
15	3	0.8
16	1	0.3
17	1	0.3
18	..	..
19	2	0.6
20	1	0.3
30	1	0.3
Total	355	100.0

only moved frequently but had been moving frequently for a considerable period of time. Of these families, 23 were found to have moved at least 10 times during their history; nine had moved 15 times or more; and one, 30 times. Further, 78.3 per cent of the families had moved one or more times, 51.8 per cent at least twice, 36.6 per cent three or more, and 26.7 per cent four times and over. The average length of residence was 2.6 years.

As may be readily inferred from the comparisons made of the mobility rates, home-owning families were found to have moved a smaller number of times than tenant families. As shown in Table XXIV, 53.4 per cent of the 60 home-owning families had not moved in the period under consideration,

while only 15.2 per cent of the tenant families had not moved. Moreover, only 40.3 per cent of the tenant families as against 87.3 per cent of the home-owning families, had not moved more than one time.

TABLE XXIV

COMPARATIVE NUMBER OF MOVES OF HOME-OWNING AND TENANT FAMILIES

Number of Moves	Number of Families Having Given Number of Moves		Percentage of Families Having Given Number of Moves	
	Tenants	Home Owners	Tenants	Home Owners
0	45	32	15.2	53.4
1	73	20	25.1	33.4
2	50	4	16.9	6.7
3	34	1	11.2	1.6
4	18	..	6.2	..
5	20	2	6.8	3.3
6	14	..	4.7	..
7	2	..	0.7	..
8	7	..	2.6	..
9	9	1	3.0	1.6
10	3	..	1.0	..
11	2	..	0.7	..
12	4	..	1.3	..
13	5	..	1.7	..
14	..	..	..	..
15	3	..	1.0	..
16	1	..	0.3	..
17	1	..	0.3	..
18	..	..	..	..
19	2	..	0.7	..
20	1	..	0.3	.
30	1	..	0.3	.
Total	295	60	100.0	100.0

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF HIGH RATES OF MOBILITY

Any general treatment of family mobility does not allow for the exceptional case. The following examples of high rates of family mobility should help to reveal the actual situation for many drifting families. The names are again fictitious.

The Bells, consisting only of husband and wife, had moved 30 times in the eight year period from 1917 to 1925. The thirty places of residence were scattered through seven North Carolina counties. The following are the towns or mill villages in the order named at which the family had lived in the eight year period: Bookford Mill, Highland Mill, Valdese, Highland Mill, Newton, Highland Mill, Gastonia, near Gastonia, Groves Mill, Smyre Mill, Rex Mill, Smyre Mill, Cramerton, Paw Creek, Rex Mill, Belmont, Madora Mill, Globe Mill, Perfection Mill, Priscilla Mill, Rex Mill, Cherryville, Lincolnton, near Shelby, Rowland, Rex Mill, Clara Mill, Dilling Mill, Cramerton, and Mountain View Mill. It is to be noted that the family passed back and forth from one mill to another in several instances, and for a number of times in each case. It was found on questioning the husband and wife that both were favorable to frequent change of residence. The probabilities are that this family adopted frequent change of residence quite naturally and unknowingly as a means of securing change and adventure in life. That some cotton mill families adopt this means of securing new experience is the opinion of at least one prominent North Carolina cotton mill owner.[1] It is possible, therefore, that one very fundamental cause of mobility of cotton mill families is centered in the desire for adventure.

Not all families that were found to have moved frequently were small. In fact, it is questionable as to whether or not the small family has a greater tendency toward frequent change of residence than the large family.

The Potters, consisting of eleven persons, father, mother, and nine children, had moved 19 times in the eighteen-year period from 1907 to 1925. The places of residence were also widely scattered, covering different sections of the three states of North and South Carolina and Virginia. During this time the Potters had resided at the following places in the order named: Lowell, Lawrence, S. C., near Lawrence, Bessemer City, Newberry, S. C., Indiantown, Rock Hill, S. C., Chester, S. C., Fort Mill, S. C., farm in South Carolina, Kinston, Petersburg, Va., Rocky Mount, Bladenboro, Lumberton, Bessemer City, farm in South Carolina, Double Shoals, S. C., Bessemer City. At two different times during the eighteen years the Potters went to the farm. They had lived on a farm before coming to the cotton mill and hence they afford an illustration of the type of family that passes back and forth from the farm to the mill several times in the attempt to get adjusted to cotton mill work. The reason given for the frequent change of residence was a matter of higher wages. The father moved to the cotton mill from the farm in 1895. He stated that his family had also moved

[1] Stuart W. Cramer in the *Charlotte Observer* (September 25, 1924), p. 27.

frequently in the twelve year period from 1895 to 1907, but was unable to remember the exact number and names of the mills, at which they had lived.

The Taylors, consisting of five persons had changed their place of residence 16 times in the six-year period from 1919 to 1925. The places of residence given were in the three states of Georgia, North and South Carolina. These were Leesburg, Ga., Albany, Ga., Clearwater, S. C., Orangeburg, S. C., Great Falls, S. C., Chester, S. C., Pineville, Chester, S. C., Greenwood, S. C., Chester, S. C., Greenwood, S. C., Spartanburg, S. C., Rock Hill, S. C., Winnsboro, S. C., Gastonia, Mountain View Mill.

The Cargile family of seven persons, including father, mother, and five children, had changed its place of residence 19 times in twenty years, during which they covered the following places of residence in the order named: Hope Mills, Bessemer City, Hope Mills, Bessemer City, Hope Mills, Bessemer City, Hope Mills, Bessemer City, Rock Hill, S. C., Bessemer City, Gastonia, Kannapolis, Concord, Kannapolis, Mooresville, Gastonia, Kannapolis, Mooresville, Bessemer City. The number of times the Cargiles had passed back and forth between two places is significant and serves to illustrate a very common tendency among cotton mill families.

The preceding illustrations were instances of families that had moved relatively long distances. It is probably safe to assume that a majority of mobile cotton mill families simply drift from one mill village to another near-by, and then back again for a varying number of times over the same territory.

The Burt family, which had moved 21 times from 1919 to 1925, is an illustration of this type. The 21 residences, which were in only two North Carolina counties, with the greatest distance between any two not more than 35 miles, are as follows: Kings Mountain, Shelby, Kings Mountain, Bessemer City, Cramerton, Kings Mountain, Bessemer City, farm near Bessemer City, Bessemer City, Kings Mountain, Bessemer City, Gastonia, Bessemer City, Gastonia, Bessemer City, Kings Mountain, Bessemer City, and four mill villages in Bessemer City.

POSSIBLE FACTORS IN A HIGH RATE OF MOBILITY

What are some of the probable causes of a high rate of mobility as indicated by the data presented in the preceding sections? To gauge the influence of certain factors in determining mobility rates, there were selected from the 500 case

studies two groups of families showing the lowest and highest rates of mobility, respectively. All families having a rate of mobility of one or more moves a year were classified as a group of highly mobile families. Contrasted with this group was a second group composed of families that had a mobility rate not in excess of one move in any five-year period.

Poor adaptation of the worker to his job or of the person to his environment, in all probability, tends to increase mobility among cotton mill families. Families interviewed were questioned as to whether or not the members of the family were satisfied with their present work. This question was designed to bring out dissatisfaction in general, whether it related to living or working conditions, or to the general environment of the mill village. In case the members were not satisfied with their lot in life they were asked what plans for a change had been made in order to find out how many had made such plans and what type of work was desired.

Of the 100 families having a rate of mobility of one or more moves a year, 70 per cent stated that they were sufficiently satisfied with their work and conditions generally to continue, while the remaining 30 per cent were definitely dissatisfied. Of these 30 dissatisfied families, 17, or 56.6 per cent, had made definite plans toward entering another vocation. The remaining 13 families, though dissatisfied, had not made any other plans and did not know what they wanted to do. Of the 112 families having a mobility rate of not over one move for any five-year period, 100, or 89.3 per cent, preferred the work to any other, while 12, or 10.7 per cent, were discontented. Ten of the 12 discontented families had made arrangements toward securing other work, while only two did not know what they desired to do. There was, accordingly, a much higher percentage of discontented families in the group of 100 families moving most frequently than in the 112 families with the lowest mobility rate. From these figures it may be inferred that dissatisfaction with work is a potent factor in determining the rate of mobility among cotton mill families.

An analysis of the average weekly wage of the two groups of families having the high and low mobility rates mentioned in the preceding section revealed no definite relation between low wages and a high rate of mobility. The average weekly wage in the group having the high rate of mobility was $16.57, while the average wage in the other group was $16.80. These differences are apparently so slight as to be entirely negligible. While these results, if typical, may tend to show that frequent moving does not necessarily reduce or raise the rate of wages, they nevertheless do not eliminate the wage problem as a factor in mobility. It must still be granted that, among cotton mill workers as among other groups, the prospects of higher wages may be the determining factor in causing many changes of residence.

Findings from the two groups of families mentioned in the preceding sections indicate a relationship between the educational status of the parents and the mobility rate of the family. Of 176 family heads[2] studied as to educational status in the group of families having the high mobility rate, 18.7 per cent were illiterate, as compared to only 8.2 per cent among the group having the low rate of mobility. However, an average difference in grade education of only 0.7 of one grade was found to exist between these two groups. Heads of highly mobile families averaged 4.5 grades while family heads of the other group stopped school at 5.2 grades.

Forty-two of the 100 families having the higher mobility rate had lived on farms before moving to the cotton mill. The average length of residence of these 42 families while on the farm was found to be 4.4 years. Of the 112 families having the lower rate of mobility, 62 had lived on farms previous to coming to the cotton mill. The average length of residence of these 62 families while on the farm was 7 years. Thus, the group of families having the higher rate of mobility in the mill also had the higher rate of mobility while living on the farm. The difference of 2.6 years in the average length of resi-

[2] Including both males and females.

dence on the farm is sufficient to show that differences in mobility between the two groups did not necessarily arise from the mill village situation.

These differences apparently exist within the individual. The practical equality of wages received by the two groups indicates that neither failure nor shiftlessness can be regarded as causes of excessive mobility. Personality traits, difficult of analysis but conditioned by the individual's experience, predispose many of these people to continuous moves. In the terms of common sense they are spoken of as having a roving disposition or a desire for change and adventure. Such persons naturally would not be content to settle down within the narrow confines of one mill village for any length of time.

Summing up, it may be said that the study leaves the impression that, save for a comparatively few exceptions, the mill families did not have an excessively high rate of mobility. The most stable group, approximately one-fifth of the 500 families, had never changed their place of residence. About the same proportion of families, on the other hand, were found to have an average length of residence of one year or less, thus indicating that a considerable portion of the cotton mill population is composed of the drifting element. The remaining three-fifths of the families studied had an average length of residence varying from one to ten years. Home-owning families were found to have a lower rate of mobility than tenant families. Considerable variation was also noted between the rates of mobility in different mill villages and between mill villages in the same town. Since the highly mobile cotton mill families had also moved more often when on the farm, it may be concluded that the tendency to move is subjective and does not develop entirely from conditions existing in mill villages.

An especially important finding from the data presented was the absence of correlation between a high rate of mobility and low wages. Wage-earners in those families having the highest rate of mobility were receiving almost exactly the same average weekly wage as received by wage-earners as a whole.

Hence, as far as these figures are concerned, it cannot be said either that low wages cause mobility or that frequent moving tends to lower wages.

CHAPTER XII

HOUSING CONDITIONS

A survey of these 500 mill families could scarcely be considered complete without some study of housing conditions. Are southern textile workers adequately housed? What are the size and condition of mill dwellings? Is there overcrowding? To what extent are modern improvements and home conveniences found? Moreover, southern mill housing with its backgrounds of southern rural life and the practices of industrial housing elsewhere makes inevitable comparisons with conditions in other sections and industries; while the practice of company ownership of houses brings up the question of the extent and possible advantages of home ownership among mill village families.

The varying types of villages in which the families studied were living brought into existence widely different housing arrangements. Considerable variation also appeared as to water and sewerage facilities, which necessarily made appreciable differences in problems of housing. In two of the five villages, for instance, no type of municipal water supply existed. Even though one of these two villages was an incorporated town, no public provision had been made for a water system at the time the study was made.

OWNERSHIP OF DWELLINGS

The study showed that the 500 cotton mill families were housed in 492 dwellings. Eight families were found to be sharing dwellings with other families. In two of the eight cases, however, the houses were of the semi-detached, two-family type. All other dwellings were of the single-family type.

Analysis of the statistics of ownership showed that 419 of the 492 dwellings, or 85.2 per cent, were company dwellings; 60, or 12.2 per cent, were dwellings of home owners; while the remaining 13, or 2.6 per cent, were rented from sources independent of the employing companies. As shown in Table XXV, in two of the five villages studied, all houses included in the survey were owned by the employing companies. In a third village only one family rented its house from an independent source. The other villages showed 74 and 78 per cent of the dwellings owned by the mills.

Complete surveys were made later of the town including communities I and III. It was found that 367 cotton mill families lived in Community I. Of these, 272, or 74.1 per cent, lived in company houses; 83, or 22.6 per cent, lived in their own homes; and 12, or 3.3 per cent, rented from outside sources. In Community III it was found that while 400 persons living in the village were regularly employed by the mills, the companies owned only 79 houses. On the basis of two workers per family and one family to the dwelling, the

TABLE XXV

STATISTICS OF OWNERSHIP OF DWELLINGS OCCUPIED BY 500 FAMILIES LIVING IN FIVE NORTH CAROLINA MILL VILLAGES

	Number of Dwellings			Percentage of Dwellings		
	Company Houses	Other Tenant Houses	Home Owners	Company Houses	Other Tenant Houses	Home Owners
Community I	154	12	42	74.0	5.8	20.2
Community II	90	..	..	100.0	..	..
Community III	64	..	18	78.0	..	22.0
Community IV	79	1	..	98.8	1.2	..
Community V	32	..	..	100.0	..	..
Totals	419	13	60	85.2	2.6	12.2

400 workers represented 200 families. Accordingly, 121 families, or 65 per cent, lived in dwellings not owned by the employing companies.

In two other cotton mill towns in the state conditions closely

paralleling the preceding instances were found.[1] Two cotton mills were located in the first town. One of these employed approximately 650 persons. The mill village was made up of 300 houses, all owned by the employing company. Approximately 595 of the 650 workers, or 91.5 per cent, as reported, were housed in the 300 company houses. Of the 55 employees remaining 25 were boarding house lodgers, while 30 lived in the rural sections near-by. In the other mill village in the town there were only 55 company dwellings, while the regular working force numbered 250 persons. On a basis of two workers to the dwelling only 110 of the 250 workers, or 44 per cent, were housed by the employing company. The combined results of the three preceding studies showed approximately 70 per cent of the workers in these three North Carolina cotton mill towns housed by the employing companies.

Although the statistics for each of the three towns varied widely, it is significant that the average of 70 per cent for the three agrees very closely with a study of housing made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1917. Of the 35,643 persons employed in 48 plants in five southern states, 25,289, or 71 per cent, were housed by the employing companies.[2] The statistics on housing gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics were also found to vary widely. The plants included in the study were in North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. In 28 of the 48 mills more than 80 per cent of the workers were housed in company dwellings, in 19 mills more than 90 per cent were housed by the company, and in 12 instances at least 95 per cent lived in company dwellings.[3]

A single comparison should indicate the much smaller extent to which New England textile manufacturers engage in industrial housing. The survey of housing conditions by the Bureau of Labor Statistics referred to showed that only 2,047, or 19.3 per cent, of the 10,624 persons employed by

[1] The cotton mill towns in question were not among the five mill communities in which the 500 families surveyed were living.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 141. [3] *Ibid.*

six companies in Massachusetts and Rhode Island were housed by the employing companies as compared to 71 per cent in the southern area.[4]

From the housing studies in the state it would seem that a larger percentage of workers not housed by the employing companies is to be found in the type of cotton mill community referred to as the cotton mill town. The nature and composition of the cotton mill town would indicate such a possibility. Since the corporations owning the mills do not own all the property in the town, opportunity is afforded for home-ownership. Working class families, attracted to the town in various ways, either build homes of their own or rent from any available source. In an effort to find work, different members of such families sooner or later secure employment in the cotton mills. The mill owners usually welcome this means of adding to their labor force since it does not involve an extra outlay of capital. In this way some cotton mills have been able to secure a large proportion of their total working force without having to build houses.

As shown by the data given, some cotton manufacturers in the state no longer find it necessary to provide dwellings for a large part of the labor force. Whether or not this situation points to the eventual passing of the southern cotton mill village is still a matter of conjecture. It is probable that, as the density of the population increases in the smaller towns and rural sections, there will be less necessity for the company house than in the past.

SIZE OF DWELLINGS

Eight of the 500 families studied were not keeping house but living in dwellings occupied by other families. Table XXVI shows the number of rooms per dwelling and the number of dwellings with the given number of rooms for the remaining 492 families. The average for all dwellings studied was 4.1 rooms.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Table XXVI

SIZE OF 492 DWELLINGS IN FIVE NORTH CAROLINA COTTON MILL VILLAGES

Number of Rooms Per Dwelling	Number of Dwellings Having Given Number of Rooms	Percentage of Dwellings Having Given Number of Rooms
2	7	1.4
3	121	24.6
4	266	54.1
5	63	12.8
6	21	4.3
7	11	2.2
8	1	0.2
9	..	..
10	..	..
11	1	0.2
12	1	0.2
Total	492	100.0

Table XXVII shows the variation in the size of dwellings in each of the five villages surveyed. In one village the average dwelling contained but 3.3 rooms as compared to an average of 4.3 rooms per dwelling in the village having the largest dwellings. By considering percentage in terms of cumulative frequency it was found that 98.6 per cent of the dwellings had more than two rooms; 74 per cent, more than three rooms; 19.9 per cent, more than four rooms; 7.1 per cent, more than five rooms; and 2.8 per cent, more than six rooms.

The 419 North Carolina company dwellings studied were found to be slightly smaller than the company dwellings in the three southern states mentioned.[5] New England company houses included in the same study had an average of 5.2 rooms per dwelling. A comparison is made in Table XXVIII of the size of the dwellings in the three groups mentioned. While there were no dwellings in the New England group with only two rooms, 1.4 per cent and 8.8 per cent, respectively, of the dwellings in North Carolina and the dwellings in the

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Table XXVII

SIZE OF DWELLINGS

Statistics of Housing Tenure in Five Mill Villages Classified Separately

	Number of Dwellings			Number of Rooms			Average Number of Rooms Per Dwelling		
	Company Houses	Other Tenant Houses	Home Owners Houses	Company Houses	Other Tenant Houses	Home Owners Houses	Company Houses	Other Tenant Houses	Home Owners Houses
Community I	154	12	42	622	52	204	4.0	4.3	4.9
Community II	90	..	..	360	..	..	4.0	..	..
Community III	64	..	18	263	..	91	4.1	..	5.1
Community IV	79	1	..	280	4	..	3.5	4.0	..
Community V	32	..	..	104	..	..	3.2	..	..
Total	419	13	60	1,629	56	295	3.88	4.3	4.9

South studied by the Bureau of Labor had only two rooms. On the other hand, while 17.0 per cent of the New England dwellings contained eight rooms and over, only 0.6 and 0.7 per cent of the North Carolina and southern dwellings, respectively, contained this number.

TABLE XXVIII

SIZE OF DWELLINGS

Statistics Showing Comparison of 419 North Carolina,[6] 10,609 Southern, and 649 New England Company Dwellings

Number of Rooms	Number of Dwellings Having Given Number of Rooms			Percentage of Dwellings Having Given Number of Rooms		
	North Carolina	South	New England	North Carolina	South	New England
2	6	941	..	1.4	8.8	..
3	117	3,165	12	24.6	29.9	1.8
4	239	4,585	55	54.1	43.2	8.5
5	41	985	155	12.8	9.3	23.9
6	7	796	209	4.3	7.5	32.2
7	6	63	108	2.2	0.6	16.6
8	1	42	20	0.2	0.4	3.1
9 and over	2	32	90	0.4	0.3	13.9
Total	419	10,609	649	100.0	100.0	100.0

As far as the results of the study of the 500 families are typical for the state as a whole, home-owning families have a larger average sized dwelling than families living either in company dwellings or in dwellings rented from sources independent of the employing companies. The average dwelling of home owners contained 4.9 rooms as compared with 3.9 and 4.3 rooms per dwelling for company and other tenant dwellings, respectively. The comparison is given in Table XXIX of the number of rooms per dwelling in company houses and in dwellings of home owners.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 149.

TABLE XXIX

SIZE OF DWELLINGS OCCUPIED BY COTTON MILL FAMILIES

419 Company Houses and 60 Dwellings of Home Owners

Number of Rooms	Number of Dwellings Having Given Number of Rooms		Percentage of Dwellings Having Given Number of Rooms	
	Company Houses	Home Owner Dwellings	Company Houses	Home Owner Dwellings
2	6	1	1.4	1.7
3	117	3	24.6	5.0
4	239	18	54.1	30.0
5	41	21	12.8	35.0
6	7	12	4.3	20.0
7	6	5	2.2	8.3
8	1	..	0.2	..
9	..	..	..	..
10	..	..	..	..
11	1	..	0.2	..
12	1	..	0.2	..
Total	419	60	100.0	100.0

COMPARISON WITH FARM TENANT DWELLINGS

Since tenant farmers have been the principal source of the labor supply for southern cotton mills, a study of housing conditions of North Carolina tenant farmers should be valuable for purposes of comparison with living conditions of cotton mill families. A survey of 109 white landless farm families in a mountain county of the state in 1922 showed that the average number of rooms per dwelling for white tenant and cropper families were 3.64 and 2.88, respectively. A similar study of a group of white landless families in the Piedmont section found that the average size of the dwellings was 4.1 rooms for tenant and 3.54 rooms for cropper families.[7] These figures indicate that tenant families in the mountains are living in dwellings averaging about one-half room less per dwelling than cotton mill families occupying company houses, while the tenant farm family in the Piedmont area has about

[7] Taylor and Zimmerman, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

the same sized dwelling as the cotton mill family. In general, therefore no significant difference exists on this point between tenant farm and mill village dwellings.

Although the dwellings of farm tenants compared favorably in size with those in the mill village it seems safe to conclude that the mill village dwelling is far superior to the farm tenant home in standard of upkeep. Not any of the mill houses visited, at least, would justify the following quotation describing the 38 white tenant farm dwellings studied in the Piedmont section: "Six of them let in water through the roofs or the floors and walls. Twenty have 203 window lights out and three have shutters off. In more than half of these dwellings it is possible to study astronomy through the holes in the roofs and geology through the cracks in the floor." [8] While the tenant farm dwelling may be of sufficient size to avoid overcrowding, this would seem to show that many are not kept in repair. Company houses, on the other hand, are as a rule kept in good repair. Only in exceptional instances does the company allow this very valuable part of its investment to suffer serious depreciation. The owners realize that the better type house attracts the more desirable families.

ROOMS AND BEDS PER FAMILY

The 2,414 persons in the families studied were housed in 1,980 rooms. Stated in averages, there was one room for every 1.2 persons, or 0.8 rooms per person. The 60 dwellings of home owners were housing 307 persons, or an average of 5.1 persons per dwelling. There were 295 rooms in the 60 dwellings occupied by home-owning families. Hence, there was one person per room in the 60 dwellings. The 419 company dwellings housed 2,047 persons in 1,629 rooms. In other words, an average of 5 persons per dwelling and 1.3 persons per room were housed in the 419 company dwellings studied. Thirteen dwellings rented from sources independent of the employing

[8] Branson and Dickey, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

companies housed 60 persons, or an average of 4.6 persons to the dwelling. The 56 rooms in the 13 dwellings housed an average of 1.1 persons per room. Dwellings of home owners, company dwellings, and other tenant dwellings were thus housing one, 1.3, and 1.1 persons per room, respectively. The indications are, therefore, that a slightly greater degree of overcrowding exists in company-owned dwellings than in either dwellings of home owners or dwellings rented from independent sources.

WORKERS PER DWELLING

In the study of housing conditions in southern mill villages by the Bureau of Labor Statistics one company was found which housed 1,500 persons in 878 rooms, or an average of 1.7 persons to a room. A second company housed 3,431 persons in 2,638 rooms, or an average of 1.3 persons to the room. A third company, from which similar statistics were secured, housed 1,000 persons in 465 rooms, an average of 2.15 persons per room.[9] It is thus seen that in each of these cases a greater degree of overcrowding existed than was found in the study of the 500 North Carolina families.

Statistics showing the number of workers per dwelling in company dwellings, in dwellings of home owners, and in dwellings rented from sources independent of the employing companies, compiled for each village studied are shown in Table XXX. The figures show an average of 2.2 workers per dwelling for home owners as compared with two wage-earners to each company-owned house. Even though a slightly greater degree of overcrowding existed in those families occupying company dwellings, there were proportionately fewer workers per dwelling in company-owned dwellings than in dwellings occupied by home owners. The assertion has been made that the southern manufacturer intentionally discriminates against the small family in an effort to secure the largest possible

[9] *Op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

TABLE XXX

WORKERS PER DWELLING

With Statistics for Company Dwellings, Other Tenant Dwellings, and Dwellings of Home Owners Classified Separately by Mill Villages

	Number of Workers Housed			Average Number of Workers Per Dwelling		
	Company Dwellings	Other Tenant Houses	Home-Owner Dwellings	Company Dwellings	Other Tenant Houses	Home-Owner Dwellings
Community I	297	22	99	1.9	1.8	2.2
Community II	138	..	..	1.5	..	..
Community III	134	..	30	2.1	1.0	1.6
Community IV	165	1	..	2.1	1.0	..
Community V	83	..	..	2.6	..	..
Total	817	23	129	2.0	1.8	2.2

number of workers per dwelling. These figures offer no support to this assertion.

Furthermore, considerable variation was found in the number of workers per dwelling in the different villages. One mill, which housed all of its employees, secured only 1.5 workers per dwelling on an average. The only remaining plant, housing all its labor force, oddly enough, had the highest average number of workers per dwelling of the five. Eighty-three workers were housed in 32 dwellings, an average of 2.6 workers to each dwelling. In two of the five villages the average number of workers housed in company dwellings was 2.1. In the remaining village of the five, 297 workers were housed in 154 company dwellings, an average of 1.9 workers per dwelling.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER MILLS AND SECTIONS

According to findings by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the study previously referred to, more workers per dwelling were housed in company houses than were housed in the company dwellings in the study. In six mills, located in four southern states, 3,199 workers were housed in 1,408 dwell-

ings.[10] This is an average of 2.3 workers to each dwelling. One of the six mills was located in North Carolina. This plant housed 624 workers in 311 houses. The average of two workers per dwelling in this instance agrees closely with the average of 1.95 employees per dwelling in the 419 company houses included in the survey.

An even closer relation was found when the size of the dwellings and the number of workers per room were considered. The average size of the 311 dwellings in the North Carolina mill village studied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics was 3.8 rooms per dwelling as compared to an average of 3.9 for the 419 company dwellings in the five villages surveyed. On the basis of the number of workers to the room, there was an average of 1.9 and two workers, respectively, in the two studies mentioned. Excluding the one North Carolina mill, the average dwelling in the five remaining southern mill villages studied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics contained 3.9 rooms. In other words, the average size of these dwellings was precisely the same as the 419 North Carolina company dwellings included in the survey, whereas the average number of workers per dwelling in the two cases was 2.34 and 1.95, respectively. These figures show that approximately 0.4 workers more per dwelling were housed in the other southern villages surveyed by the Bureau.

It was found from results obtained in the same survey that textile dwellings in New England house a considerably larger number of workers than North Carolina company houses. A study of four textile communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island showed that 1,817 wage-earners were housed in 570 dwellings, or an average of 3.19 wage-earners per dwelling as compared to 1.95 in the five North Carolina villages studied. This difference, however, is eliminated when considered in terms of the number of workers per room. The average size of the New England dwellings was 6.3 rooms as compared to 3.9 rooms per dwelling in the 419 company

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

dwellings studied. The average number of workers per room in the two cases was 0.51 and 0.50, respectively.

The number of beds,[11] per family in the 492 households in the five villages studied is given in Table XXXI. The average

TABLE XXXI

NUMBER OF BEDS PER COTTON MILL FAMILY

In Tenant and Home-owning Families

Number of Beds Per Household	Number of Households Having Given Number of Beds			Percentage of Households Having Given Number of Beds		
	Tenant	Home Owner	Total	Tenant	Home Owner	Total
1	8	..	8	1.8	..	1.6
2	10	..	10	2.3	..	2.0
3	53	2	55	12.1	3.3	11.0
4	163	15	178	37.0	25.0	35.6
5	158	25	183	36.0	41.7	36.6
6	30	10	40	6.8	16.7	8.0
7	13	7	20	2.9	11.6	4.0
8	4	1	5	0.9	..	1.0
9	..	..	..	..	..	..
10	1	..	1	0.2	1.7	0.2
Total	440	60	500	100.0	100.0	100.0

number of beds per family and persons per bed were 3.5 and 1.4, respectively, for all families. Home-owning families had 4.3 beds per family and 1.2 persons per bed, while tenant families had 3.4 beds per family and 1.4 persons per bed. Thus, while the home-owning families had a larger number of beds per family they also had larger families on the average so that the difference between the number of persons per bed for home-owning and tenant families is negligible.

It was found from statistics given in the study of living conditions of North Carolina farmers,[12] that the average number of persons per bed among white landless farm families

[11] The standard sized double-bed was in practically universal use in the homes in which the study was made. Single beds were rarely found.

[12] Taylor and Zimmerman, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

was 1.53 and 1.48, respectively, for tenant and cropper families in the mountain county studied. The same study showed an average of 1.24 and 1.49 persons per bed in the two groups of landless families in the Piedmont section of the state. These figures show little difference between farm tenant and cotton mill families relative to the number of beds per family and persons per bed.

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF OVERCROWDING

As has been shown by the statistics presented in the preceding sections of the chapter, housing conditions in North Carolina company towns compare favorably with housing conditions in textile areas in other parts of the country. At the same time instances of overcrowding were found. These cases cannot be given their proper significance by a general statistical treatment, and in view of that, several examples of overcrowding are considered in the cases that follow:

Case 1. Nine persons are housed in a three-room dwelling containing four beds. Four of the nine persons are roomers of both sexes. The male head of the house has deserted. His wife is working in the mill. Four children, two boys and two girls, ranging in age from fifteen years down, compose the remaining members of the household. The oldest child, a girl fifteen years of age, is keeping house.

Case 2. This family of nine persons, composed of man, wife, and seven children, is housed in a three-room dwelling. The family possesses but three beds, thus making three persons to each bed. The children, four of whom are boys, while three are girls, range in age from fifteen down. The oldest child, a girl, is a weaver in the mill. Although he is a loom fixer the father's wages amounted to only fifteen dollars a week.

Case 3. A third family of eleven persons is housed in a three-room dwelling. Only three beds are in the house. The father, 69 years of age, is disabled. His wife, by a second marriage, is only 42. Two children, evidently of a former marriage, are respectively 40 and 30 years of age. Two children, twins, are 21 years of age, while the five remaining children range in age from 12 down.

HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS AND HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT

The condition of the dwellings varied according to their age. As a rule older houses were not as well constructed as

the newer dwellings. Regardless of age, there was little difference in actual size, indicating that little change has taken place in the size of dwellings constructed in the period covered. All houses were constructed of wood. Statistics concerning the ages of dwellings may be secured by reference to Table XXXII. As may be observed, the ages of houses varied

Table XXXII

AGES OF DWELLINGS IN FIVE COTTON MILL VILLAGES[13]

Number of Years	Number of Dwellings in Each Group	Percentage of Dwellings in Each Age Group
0- 4	190	42.7
5- 9	30	6.7
10-14	10	2.3
15-19	5	1.1
20-24	130	29.2
25-29	35	7.9
30-34	45	10.1
Total	445	100.0

from one to 34 years. The average age of all dwellings was 14.1 years, the median age 11.3 years, and the modal age 5.7 years.

Of the 492 dwellings, 96.9 per cent were painted. The 15 unpainted dwellings were found in two of the five villages studied. Unpainted company dwellings composed only 1.9 per cent of all company dwellings as compared with 11.6 per cent of the dwellings of home owners that were not painted.

Of the 492 dwellings studied, 350, or 71.1 per cent, were provided with facilities for running water.[14] The remaining 142 dwelling had no facilities of this nature. Of the 142 dwellings lacking this facility, 112 were in two villages, neither of which had made any provision for a municipal water supply. A larger proportion of company dwellings was equipped with running water facilities than dwellings of home owners.

[13] Includes 445 dwellings. Ages of 47 dwellings could not be secured.

[14] "Running water" included here any dwelling having water either within the house, on the porch, or on tap in the yard.

Eighty-one per cent of the former and 65 per cent of the latter were so provided. Inquiry as to the source of the water supply for home use showed that 196, or 39.2 per cent, of the families depended upon a municipal water source; 192 families, or 38.4 per cent, were supplied from different types of bored wells provided by the employing companies; and 112 families, or 22.4 per cent, were using water from open wells. Dwellings equipped with inside toilets composed 69.8 per cent of the total. Of the 149 dwellings lacking this facility, 112 were in the two villages lacking a municipal water supply. As in the case of dwellings painted and in provisions for running water, a smaller percentage of the dwellings of home owners was provided with inside toilets than company dwellings. Thirty-five per cent of the dwellings of home owners and 29.6 per cent of the company dwellings were without inside toilets.

Of the 500 families, 463, or 92.6 per cent, were provided with electric lights, 36 families used oil lamps, and one family a gasoline lamp. Home-owning and tenant families not provided with electric lights comprised 10 and 7.2 per cent, respectively, of the total in the two groups. It should be noted that a smaller percentage of home owners had provided this improvement. The open fireplace served as the heating device for 98.8 per cent of the families. The remaining 1.2 per cent of the families were supplied with stoves. Of three telephones in use in the 500 families, two were in dwellings of home owners.

Families supplied with sewing machines composed 82 per cent of all households studied. Every home-owning family and 78.8 per cent of the tenant families were provided with this household convenience. Only 211 families, or 42.2 per cent, reported refrigerators. A much larger percentage of home owners reported refrigerators than tenant families, 63.3 and 39.3 per cent respectively. Only 197 of the 500 families had a musical instrument of any type. A few families reported more than one musical instrument. Instruments reported were

82 victrolas,[15] 52 organs, 25 pianos, 38 stringed or brass instruments, and two radios. Only 35.7 per cent of the tenant families reported any type of musical instrument whatever as compared to 66.6 per cent of the home-owning families.

As far as the results of the study show, dwellings of home-owning cotton mill families are not as well equipped with permanent housing improvements and fixtures as are company dwellings. Also, a smaller percentage of families in company houses used water from open wells. These results seem to indicate that the home owner is either unable or unwilling to equip his home with permanent improvements to the extent that the employing companies equip their dwellings. On the other hand, however, a larger proportion of home-owning families are provided with personal household conveniences. This is a situation that may normally be expected. Since the tenant family is more mobile than the home-owning family, a large amount of household furnishings would deter frequent moving because of both inconvenience and greater expense, as well as wear and tear on the furniture. In Tables XXXIII and XXXIV comparisons are shown with regard to modern conveniences and equipment.

It should be noted that 30 per cent of the wage earners either owned their homes or rented dwellings not owned by the mill. This proportion of southern cotton mill workers not housed in company dwellings is probably higher than is generally assumed by those who have not made a detailed study of the situation. In fact, one of the criticisms most frequently leveled at the southern textile industry is in connection with the housing policies of the companies. As long as 30 per cent of the workers live in dwellings not controlled by the industry in which they find employment, one may question the validity of the attacks made on the industry in this connection. On the other hand, there are doubtless some employers who persistently refuse to hire workers unless they live in a company house, and for this group the above crit-

[15] Includes all types of talking machines.

Table XXXIII

HOUSING FIXTURES AND IMPROVEMENTS—COMPANY AND HOME-OWNER DWELLINGS

(Includes 419 Company and 60 Home-Owner Dwellings)

	Percentage							
	Dwellings Painted	Having Open Wells	With Running Water	Having Indoor Toilets	Having Electric Lights	Having Telephones	Heating	
							Fire-Place	Stove
Company	98.1	19.3	81.0	70.4	92.8	0.2	99.1	0.1
Home Owner	88.4	35.0	65.0	65.0	90.0	3.3	96.7	3.3

TABLE XXXIV

HOUSEHOLD CONVENIENCES—TENANT AND HOME-OWNER FAMILIES

(Includes 440 Tenant and 60 Home-owning Families)

	PERCENTAGE			
	HAVING SEWING MACHINES	HAVING VACUUM CLEANERS	HAVING REFRIGERATORS	MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
Tenant	78.8	0.7	39.3	35.7
Home Owner	100.0	0.0	63.3	66.6

icisms are probably entirely justified.

Furthermore, the tendency on the part of some of the older mills to hire more workers not living in company houses is indicative of a significant trend. After a number of years have elapsed since the construction of the first unit of the mill, and as other units are added and more workers are employed, the tendency is to employ workers living in the neighborhood regardless of who owns the dwelling occupied by the prospective worker. Practically the only instances in which the foregoing statement does not hold true are in connection with the highly paternalistic company towns where the employers own all buildings and real estate. Fortunately, as was found in Chapter IV, such villages are comparatively rare throughout the South.

It is also significant to note that 60, or 12.2 per cent, of the 492 dwellings housing the 500 North Carolina cotton mill families studied were owned by the people occupying them. The probabilities are that this is as high a percentage of home owners as would ordinarily be found among workers in any well established industry, especially in view of the high rates of labor turnover in most industries.

A further finding in connection with the study of housing concerns the average number of rooms in company dwellings and in dwellings of home owners. Whereas considerable variation was noted in the size of the dwellings in the five villages studied, company dwellings on the whole averaged about

three-fourths of a room less than the dwellings of home owners. This smaller average size of dwellings, however, is more than offset when the number of persons per room is considered. Since home owners had the larger families there were 2.2 persons on an average to the room in the dwellings of home owners as compared with two persons per room in company dwellings. In other words, a slightly greater degree of housing congestion was observed in families of home owners than in families occupying company dwellings. If actual need determines the number of wage-earners per family, it may be that the home-owning cotton mill family is in hardly as favorable circumstances as the family living in a company house. The nominal rental charge by the company of $4.00 a month is less than the investment and cost of upkeep of a home. To the extent that ownership of a home tends to tie a family to a particular locality, an additional disadvantage lies in the worker's inability to profit by opportunities for more remunerative work in other localities.

CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

It is of interest to estimate the educational status of the adult mill operatives. The amount of education secured by young people now growing up in the mill villages has proved a matter for conjecture and debate. The claims as to whether the cotton mill offers advantages to its youth or restricts their opportunities must be settled by an appeal to educational statistics. However, in order to understand attitudes of the mill village toward education, information must be secured as to educational levels attained by parents as well as children. Accordingly, information was secured as to grades attained in school by married males and females and by unmarried wage-earners of both sexes. Similar age-grade data were collected for children in the family who were attending school. It was sought to ascertain the grades in which mill children drop out of school. To secure some basis of comparison between cotton mill children and children of other occupational groups, a study was made of the proportion of the enrollment in each grade that was composed of cotton mill children and of the children of all other occupational groups.

A final aspect of the survey was concerned with a study of the occupations of young people from cotton mill families who had received an eighth grade education or more, as an index of what becomes of the cotton mill boy or girl who gets as far as the high school.[1] It is believed that such a study will throw considerable light on the future outlook for people in cotton mill villages and serve as a significant indication as

[1] It should be observed that the high school grades in North Carolina begin with the eighth grade and end with the eleventh.

to whether or not the cotton mill village tends to promote a social type.

GRADE ATTAINED BY FAMILY HEADS

There were marked differences in the amount of education received by the fathers and the mothers of the families studied. These differences are of such an outstanding nature that they can hardly be the result of chance selection. On the contrary, they apparently indicate that some cotton mill villages attract and hold a higher type of worker than others. In all probability it is true that the lowest element of cotton mill workers tends to drift into certain villages. By referring to the statistics of Table XXXV it will be observed that eight years was the lowest mean age at which male heads stopped school, while thirteen years was the highest in the five villages studied. Similar figures for females were 8.6 and 13 years for

TABLE XXXV

AGE AND GRADE ATTAINED BY HEADS OF FAMILIES

(With Statistics for Five Villages Classified Separately)

VILLAGE	AVERAGE AGE		AVERAGE GRADE		PERCENTAGE ILLITERATE	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Community I	12.5	13.0	5.4	5.4	11.2	7.2
Community II	11.4	12.9	5.0	5.7	18.0	9.0
Community III	11.6	13.0	5.9	5.0	17.1	1.3
Community IV	13.5	12.9	6.1	5.8	6.4	8.2
Community V	8.0	8.6	3.0	3.0	45.8	32.0
Total	11.9	12.7	5.3	5.2	15.5	8.2

the lowest and highest mean ages, respectively. The mean ages at which all male and female heads of families stopped school were 11.9 and 12.7 years, respectively. A marked difference also existed among the villages surveyed as to the grades attained by these same family heads. The lowest mean grade attained by both male and female heads of families in the five villages studied was the third. The highest mean grade for males was 6.1, and for females 5.8 grades. The

mean grades attained by all male and female family heads were 5.3 and 5.2, respectively. Thus little difference was found between sexes in the grade education attained by family heads.

More significant were figures of illiteracy. For males the highest and lowest percentages of illiteracy were 45.8 and 6.4 per cent, respectively, in two of the five villages studied. Similar figures for females ranged from 32.0 to 1.3 per cent in the case of the two villages containing the highest and lowest percentages, respectively. Illiterate males composed 15.5 per cent of all male heads of families, while illiterate females formed 8.2 per cent of all female heads of families. Combining the two sexes, 11.6 per cent of all family heads were found to be illiterate.

The high mean grade attained by both sexes is significant and possibly contrary to popular belief. It is possible that the statistics may show a more favorable situation than that which actually exists. On account of the ungraded condition of the schools they attended, many family heads were unable to state just what grade they reached in school. In such cases an estimate based on the particular studies last pursued was made. It is apparent, therefore, that the possibility of error was considerably augmented in attempting to estimate the grade attained in each particular case.

A comparison of age-grade statistics was made of home-owning family heads with the group as a whole. The mean ages attained by males and females in the sixty home-owning families when they stopped school were 13 and 13.8 years, respectively, while the mean grades were similarly, 5.8 and 5.6 for the two sexes. From these figures it is apparent that the heads of home-owning families received approximately 0.5 of a grade more of public school education than the family heads of the group as a whole.

Relatively few heads of families of either sex reported a high school education of eleven grades. Of the males 3.1 per cent were high school graduates, as compared to 2.5 per cent

of female family heads. A slightly larger proportion of males had reached high school than females; 22.5 per cent of all male heads of families and 19.7 per cent of the females had received this amount of education. Those with a seventh grade education or better constituted 40.2 and 35.4 per cent, respectively, of the two groups. In general, the variation between the sexes as regards the proportion of the total in each grade is small, as may be readily seen from Table XXXVI.

TABLE XXXVI

GRADE ATTAINED BY FAMILY HEADS

(In 500 North Carolina Cotton Mill Families)

GRADE	PERCENTAGE		
	MALES	FEMALES	BOTH SEXES
Illiterate	15.6	8.2	11.6
First	1.7	0.8	1.2
Second	2.0	4.2	3.2
Third	8.7	8.0	8.3
Fourth	12.1	19.3	16.0
Fifth	11.9	14.9	13.5
Sixth	7.8	9.2	8.6
Seventh	17.7	15.7	16.6
Eighth	11.9	10.2	10.9
Ninth	4.0	4.2	4.1
Tenth	2.3	2.0	2.1
Eleventh	3.1	2.5	2.8
College:			
1	0.3	0.5	0.4
2	..	0.3	0.2
3	0.6	..	0.3
4	0.3	..	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

A small percentage of these fathers and mothers had received one or more years of college training. The colleges attended, however, were of junior grade. The three women who had attended college had married men of mediocre ability and, even though the women themselves possessed good intellectual ability, their chances of achievement were thus largely eliminated. The four men who had attended college were

failures in life. It was learned that in each case the individual had started his career in a position demanding some foresight and ability, but each had failed in one position after another until he was finally forced down to the rank of an unskilled laborer in a cotton mill.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF UNMARRIED WORKERS

The average grade attained by both single males and single females when they stopped school was 5.5, and both sexes were found to have stopped school at the average age of 13.2 years. (See Table XXXVII). These figures indicate some-

TABLE XXXVII

GRADE ATTAINED BY UNMARRIED PERSONS OVER FOURTEEN

(In 500 North Carolina Cotton Mill Families)

GRADE	PERCENTAGE		
	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Illiterate	5.0	6.5	5.7
First	..	..	..
Second	1.8	2.6	2.2
Third	10.5	8.4	9.4
Fourth	15.4	15.6	15.5
Fifth	13.6	15.6	14.6
Sixth	16.7	11.0	13.9
Seventh	20.4	17.6	19.0
Eighth	12.3	15.6	13.9
Ninth	2.5	4.5	3.5
Tenth	1.8	0.7	1.3
Eleventh	..	1.9	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

thing of a general tendency on the part of the unmarried workers to stop school in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, with more stopping at the seventh than at any other one grade. The statement holds equally true for males and for females. Presumably the lure of the cotton mill and the weekly pay envelope was stronger than the urge to attend school. Necessity also probably forced some of these to seek gainful

employment who might otherwise have attended school for a greater length of time.

One rather significant fact, by way of comparison with similar data for family heads, is that relating to the proportion of the two groups receiving an eighth grade education or having one or more years of high school education. According to the findings for the two groups, a smaller proportion of the unmarried workers had reached the high school than of family heads, the figures in the two instances being 19.7 per cent and 21.0 per cent, respectively. It should also be noted that the proportion completing the eleventh grade and hence graduating from high school was higher for the married group than for the unmarried group. While 3.9 per cent of the family heads had attained an eleventh grade education or more, only 1.0 per cent of the unmarried workers had reached the same educational level.

It is a difficult matter to account for this rather unexpected situation. As previously stated, the difficulty in learning the grade attained by family heads, due to the unclassified condition of the schools attended by some, might account for some of the difference, as the younger group had attended schools having a definite grade classification. However, since (as shown in Chapter VIII) a larger proportion of the unmarried workers than of the family heads were reared in mill villages and hence had greater access to the mills, a larger proportion would naturally stop school and go to work, than where such opportunity was lacking. Having nothing of a definite nature to do on the farm during the winter months, and with no other employment in view, the older group probably took greater advantage of available educational facilities than did the younger group, who had the choice of employment in the mill as an alternative to going to school.

On the contrary, it should be observed that the proportion of illiterates was about twice as high for family heads as for unmarried workers, the percentages being 11.6 and 5.7, respectively. However, this difference was noted only in the

case of males in the two groups studied, the percentages for the females in the two groups being closely paralleled. While 15.6 per cent of the men who were heads of families were illiterate, only 5.0 per cent of the unmarried men were illiterate. In fact, whereas illiteracy was practically twice as prevalent among the married men as among the married women, the group of unmarried men actually had a slightly lower percentage of illiteracy than the unmarried women. The trend, therefore, according to these findings is toward a reduction of illiteracy for younger generations of both sexes, with the tendency more pronounced for men than for women, a natural situation, since there was greater room for improvement in literacy among males in cotton mill families than among females.

A study of the educational status of unmarried workers of home-owning families revealed a higher average grade education than that attained by the group of unmarried workers as a whole. As compared with an average of 5.5 grades for unmarried workers of the group as a whole, unmarried workers of home-owning families had attained an average of 7.1 grades. Single males in home-owning families averaged 7.3 grades, and single females 6.9 grades. The average age attained when these same persons stopped school was found to be 14.4 and 14.1 years, respectively. It is thus seen that single male workers of home-owning families remained in school approximately one-third of a year longer than single female workers in the same families and also had a correspondingly higher average grade education. On the contrary, in home owning families a larger percentage of females had attained a high school education than males. While 22.7 per cent of females had an eighth grade education or better, only 16.6 per cent of the males had reached high school. On the other hand, practically the same proportion of males and females reported a grade education higher than the third; the figures in this instance were 82.7 and 82.5 per cent, respectively.

STATISTICS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOL

Of the 412 children attending school in the 500 families studied, from whom definite age-grade statistics could be secured, only 48.5 per cent were at age for their grade, 50.2 per cent were retarded one or more years, and only 1.2 per cent were under age for their work. One possible cause for the abnormally high percentage retarded one or more years may be in the age at which mill children start school. Although there were 52 children reported as being six years of age in the 500 families, only 11 of the 52, or 21.1 per cent, had started school. It is apparent from these figures that the large majority of the children in the 500 families must enter school one year retarded. Data concerning ages and grades of the mill children attending the public schools are given in Table XXXVIII.

TABLE XXXVIII

ENROLLMENT BY AGE AND GRADE OF CHILDREN ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOL IN 500 COTTON MILL FAMILIES

AGE	GRADE											TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
6	10	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	2.7
7	28	19	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	47	11.4
8	7	19	11	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	37	8.9
9	5	19	21	11	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	57	13.9
10	6	6	17	19	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	54	13.1
11	2	6	12	14	16	5	1	..	..	..	..	56	13.6
12	4	7	7	13	10	13	2	..	..	..	..	56	13.6
13	1	1	4	4	6	12	9	2	2	..	..	41	10.0
14	..	1	2	3	8	6	6	5	2	..	..	33	8.0
15	..	..	3	..	..	..	1	5	..	..	..	9	2.2
16	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	2	1	1	..	6	1.4
17	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	1	4	1.0
18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	0.2
Total	63	79	77	64	47	37	21	15	7	1	1	412	
Per Cent	15.3	19.2	18.7	15.5	11.4	9.0	5.1	3.7	1.7	0.2	0.2	..	100.0

It may be observed that there was no significant decline in the enrollment from thirteen to fourteen years of age. Rather, the marked decrease in the enrollment by age came between fourteen and fifteen. Fourteen is the legal age limit at which a child may go to work in North Carolina. Only a very small proportion of the children enrolled were over fourteen years of age, and only 5.8 per cent of the total number enrolled were in the four high school grades. The most marked decline in the enrollment by grades came from the sixth to the seventh and from the eighth to the ninth grades. The majority of those finishing the second year of high school, on the other hand, usually graduated from high school.

ENROLLMENT OF MILL CHILDREN AND OTHER OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS COMPARED

It was decided to estimate the extent to which cotton mill children remained in school as compared with children from other homes. Accordingly a study was made of the occupations of the parents in a number of schools where a large portion of the enrollment was composed of cotton mill children. This study included 3,391 elementary school children enrolled in the seven grades below the high school, and of 1,412 high school students. Of the 3,391 elementary school children, 1,815, or 55.2 per cent, were cotton mill children, while the remaining 1,576 were from homes of other occupational groups.

Investigation of the occupational statistics on the above basis showed a wide discrepancy in the proportion of mill children enrolled to the total enrollment in grades one to seven. The enrollment for the first grade showed that 64.9 per cent were mill children and only 35.1 per cent were children of all other occupational groups. Similar figures for the seventh grade showed that only 29.1 per cent of the total enrollment was composed of cotton mill children. In other words, the proportion of mill children enrolled decreased 35.8 per cent from the first to the seventh grades as shown in Table XXXIX.

TABLE XXXIX

PROPORTION OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT COMPOSED OF MILL CHILDREN AS COMPARED TO ALL OTHER OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

A. Elementary Grades—with Statistics from Five Schools.						
GRADE	NUMBER			PERCENTAGE		
	MILL	ALL OTHER	TOTAL	MILL	ALL OTHER	TOTAL
One	486	263	749	64.9	35.1	100.0
Two	332	207	539	61.6	38.4	100.0
Three	309	222	531	58.2	41.8	100.0
Four	236	178	414	57.0	43.0	100.0
Five	173	201	374	46.2	53.8	100.0
Six	173	249	422	40.0	60.0	100.0
Seven	106	256	362	29.1	70.9	100.0
B. High School Grades—with Statistics from Four Additional Schools —(Nine in All).						
Eight	83	455	538	15.4	84.6	100.0
Nine	47	304	351	13.4	86.6	100.0
Ten	33	279	312	10.6	89.4	100.0
Eleven	16	195	211	7.6	92.4	100.0
Total	1,994	2,809	4,803	41.5	58.5	100.0

The proportion of mill children enrolled remained fairly constant from the first through the fourth grades. The first marked decline came in the fifth grade, with further rapid declines in the sixth and seventh grades. The explanation for this situation is fairly evident. Children are becoming fourteen in increasing numbers when these grades are reached. A large number of cotton mill children stop school at fourteen and begin their contribution to the family income.

On account of the small number of mill children that were found to have reached high school, it was necessary to add statistics of high school enrollment of a number of other schools to the data already collected. Occupational statistics of the parents of 1,412 high school students were secured. Of this number, 179, or 12.7 per cent, were mill children. The proportion of the total enrollment composed of mill children ranged from 15.4 per cent in the eighth to only 7.6 per

cent in the eleventh grade.

Little variation was observed in the sex distribution of cotton mill children enrolled in the different grades. The figures indicate that about the same proportion of girls and boys in the mill village stop school and go to work shortly after the minimum working age is attained.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN MILL VILLAGES HAVING MORE THAN A GRAMMAR GRADE EDUCATION

As a measure of the effect of a high school education on young people of mill families in their choice of a vocation, a study was made of the present occupations of 188 young people who had reached high school before they stopped school. From Table XL it may be readily seen that the majority of those stopping school in the eighth grade go into the mills to find work. Sixty-three of the 71, or 88.8 per cent of those stopping school in this grade, went into the cotton mill. Of the 39 reporting a ninth grade education, 27, or 69.2 per cent, were cotton mill operatives. Only 15 reported a tenth grade education. Of this number 12 were working in the mills. Statistics of occupation were secured for 63 high school graduates. Only four of this number, or 6.4 per cent, were cotton mill workers. Twenty-five, or 39.9 per cent of the 63 graduates, were college students, 16 were bookkeepers or stenographers, eight were department store clerks, five were nurses, and four were teachers.

Of the four high school graduates who were working in the mill, one was inspecting cloth on a piece-rate basis and earning approximately one hundred dollars a month; a second reported that she was planning to take a course in stenography as soon as the necessary financial arrangements could be made. This girl had made an exceptional record in high school, and since her family was unable to help her financially, she was working in the mill as the readiest means of raising the money needed for the business course. The two remaining persons of the four high school graduates working in the mills were

Table XL

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF 188 COTTON MILL VILLAGE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO REACHED HIGH SCHOOL BEFORE GOING TO WORK

(With Statistics for Each Grade Classified Separately)

Occupation	Grade									
	8		9		10		11		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Cotton Mill Operative	63	88.8	27	69.2	12	80.0	4	6.4	106	56.4
College Student	..	....	..	....	..	....	25	39.9	25	18.3
Clerks	4	5.6	3	7.7	1	6.66	8	12.6	16	8.5
Bookkeeping and Stenography	1	1.4	1	2.6	..	....	16	25.2	18	9.5
Nursing	..	....	..	....	..	....	5	7.9	5	2.7
Teaching	..	....	..	....	..	....	4	6.4	4	2.1
Construction and Mechanical	..	....	3	7.7	1	6.67	1	1.6	5	2.7
Housework	2	2.8	4	10.2	1	6.67	..	....	7	3.7
All Other Occupations	1	1.4	1	2.6	..	....	..	....	2	1.1
Total	71	100.0	39	100.0	15	100.0	63	100.0	188	100.0

males. Both of these, as far as could be ascertained, had found their life work. Investigation of the high school records of each showed a poor grade of work. The superintendent of schools, who was interviewed relative to the intelligence of the two boys concerned, reported that both were of mediocre ability. For the majority of mill children, the fact that they finish high school means that they abandon the cotton mill as an occupation.

A study of the sex distribution of the 188 persons who had reached high school showed that 93 were males and 95 were females. The same number of both sexes were found to be working in the mills. Fifty-three boys and 53 girls, or a total of 106, were thus employed. Little difference prevails between the two sexes as to the number who go into the mills from high school. Little difference as to sex was also noted in the number of high school graduates. Of the 63 persons who had completed high school, 33 were males and 30 were females. A larger proportion of males than females, on the other hand, were college students. Fifteen of the 93 males, or 17.2 per cent, were college students, as compared to 10, or 9.5 per cent, of the females. The three listed as public school teachers were all females. Bookkeeping and stenography were found to be very fruitful fields for both sexes. Eighteen persons, 7 males and 11 females, were employed in that capacity.

Although seven females had married since leaving school, not one of the seven had completed high school. The fact that not any of the 33 girls who had graduated from high school had married would seem to indicate that the cotton mill girl who receives a high school education does not marry as young as do those who do not complete high school.

ILLITERATE FAMILIES—CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

While the statistics of education thus far presented would seem to indicate a fair educational status, possibly higher than popular belief, entire families who were illiterate were found. Two such cases will be presented as illustrative of the type.

Case 1. Instances were found of family heads frankly and openly opposed to any education whatever. One man, the family head of an illiterate family of six, including himself, wife, and four children, stated frankly that he was opposed to education in any amount. He felt that "education did not pay" and that it "made people mean." He had drawn this conclusion chiefly from the case of a female relative who, after having received a business training and entering office work, had become immoral through unfavorable environmental influences. The four children in the family had never attended school. By moving frequently, they had successfully evaded the school attendance laws. All four children were cotton mill workers, though one of the four could hardly have been fourteen years of age. Each child was earning eleven dollars a week, while the father earned only twelve dollars per week. The mother was keeping house.

The family moved to the cotton mill in 1914 from a tenant farm in the North Carolina mountains. In the 11 years intervening, a total of 22 changes of residence had been made, or an average of one move every six months. When questioned as to his reason for leaving the farm and going to the cotton mill, the father gave the reply commonly received that "we can make more here than on the farm."

Case 2. This family, composed of man, wife, and five children, were all illiterate with the exception of one ten-year old child who was a third-grade pupil. The four remaining children were working in the mill. Not any of the four children had attended school for a sufficient length of time to learn to read or write. The father stated that he did not think it worth while to educate his children, saying "about all they can do is work in the cotton mill anyway." He was, of course, opposed to any child labor law that placed an age limitation on work. As was true in the preceding case, this family also had a high mobility rate. The father came from the farm to the mill with his family in 1915, and since that time had moved 17 times.

Apparently the two cases cited are representative of the lowest element of southern cotton mill village population. They are typical illustrations of families who, deprived of advantages in early life, are lacking in ambition to improve their adverse situation. Moreover, it is to be realized that such conditions are not wholly, perhaps in some cases not at all, the result of the environment of the mill village. The ready means of eking out an existence offered by the mills naturally attract such families. Some mills refuse to employ such low grade workers. As a result they tend to congregate in certain villages that still tolerate the more shiftless element.

It will be recalled in the study of the educational status

of mill village population that 11.6 per cent of the fathers and mothers of the 500 families were found to be illiterate. Little difference was found in the amount of education received on the basis of sex. Furthermore, family heads of home-owning families had a slightly better education than the family heads of the entire group of families, thus indicating a slight relation between education and home ownership. Unmarried persons in these families were better educated than the family heads. There were also fewer illiterates among the unmarried group over fourteen years of age.

A study of the school enrollment by age and grade of the children of the families studied showed that an unusually large proportion was retarded one or more years. Probable causes of this unfavorable situation include indifference toward education on the part of parents and children, poorly trained teachers, short school terms, and inadequate school facilities. Cotton mill children were found to be stopping school in unusually large numbers as soon as they reached their fourteenth birthday. A study of the enrollment by grade also showed that mill children compose a steadily decreasing proportion of the total enrollment in each higher grade. Very few mill children ever get as far as the first year of high school. A study of the occupations of 188 young people of cotton mill families, who had reached high school before going to work, showed that the large majority of those stopping school when in the first three high school grades go into the cotton mill to find work. On the other hand, practically all of those graduating from high school enter other occupations. In view of the very small proportion of cotton mill children who ever get beyond the sixth or the seventh grade, relatively little opportunity is offered for the entrance of cotton mill children into other occupations. Therefore, the chances are that, unless an increasing proportion of these children complete high school and go to college, the children of cotton mill operatives will in turn become cotton mill operatives to such an extent that an hereditary occupational group may be developed in the southern cotton mill village.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COTTON MILL AS A SCHOOL FOR FOREMEN AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Treatment of the social and economic status of operative families presents only one aspect of cotton mill village life. In order to give a comprehensive picture of the whole situation it is also necessary to study the men in charge of the plants in which the operative families were employed. Since practically all of the overseers and superintendents came from the ranks, added interest is attached to them as a part of the cotton mill village population. The men in charge of the various departments, who were themselves at one time a part of the rank and file of laborers, represent that portion of cotton mill village population which has achieved success in the work, as contrasted with the families referred to in the preceding section.

The present chapter is based on material collected in a study of the foremen, superintendents, and plant managers in charge of the mills in which the five hundred operative families studied were working. The age and wage at which each individual began work, the amount of formal and technical education each received, statistics of membership in churches, fraternal orders, and the extent of participation in community and governmental activities were secured of 51 foremen, superintendents, and plant managers.[1]

Of the 51 officials studied, 41 were overseers, six were superintendents of individual mills, and four were general superintendents or plant managers of two or more mills. Of the 41 overseers, 13 were in charge of the spinning depart-

[1] Two plants refused to give this information.

ment, eight were overseers of weaving, nine were card-room overseers, five were in charge of the mechanical department, three were cloth-room foremen, and three twister-room foremen. Inquiry as to the marital condition showed that 46 of these men were married, three were unmarried, and two were widowed.

AGE

The 51 superiors ranged in age from 23 to 61 years, with an average age of 37.8 years and a median of 35.8 years. The four general superintendents ranged from 38 to 55 averaging 44.9 years. The six superintendents of plants were slightly younger, ranging from 34 to 54 years with an average age of 43.5. The foremen were from 20 to 61 with an average age of 36.4 years.

FORMER OCCUPATIONS

Statistics of the present or former occupation of the fathers of these officials showed that 27 were farmers, eight were cotton mill operatives, five were carpenters, and one each was an overseer of a cotton mill, a railway employee, a blacksmith, a jeweler, a physician, a shoemaker, and a mechanic. Records of the past occupations of the men themselves indicated that a large percentage had been engaged in some other line of work at some previous time. Only 39.2 per cent had been in cotton mill work all of their lives, while 47.1 per cent had farmed. Other occupations listed were carpentry, mechanical work, barbering, clerical work, lumbering, and public service. Of interest and significance was the information secured showing the first jobs held in the cotton mill by these men. Of the 50 reporting on this topic, 25 began as sweepers, four were band makers, three were helpers in the spinning-room, three were doffers, two were weavers, two were drawing hands, while one each began as a bobbin boy, waiter on spooler, helper in laying up roping, checker boy, helper in laying up warping, hose turner, stitcher, twister hand, cotton opener, and wood-yard helper. It is significant that in every case

studied the person had begun on an unskilled job and had worked his way up to his present position.

Since practically all of these men entered cotton mill work prior to the passage of a child labor law in North Carolina, in most instances the work was taken up at an age below the present legal working age in the state. One individual reported that he began work when only 7 years of age, two when 8, five at 9, four at 10, seven at 11, three at 12, and one at 13. In other words, of the 46 reporting the age at which they began work, 22, or 46.0 per cent, started under the present legal age limit in North Carolina.

Information was also obtained showing the wages received on the first jobs in 45 cases. Of these, 15.6 per cent reported a beginning daily wage of only $0.10; 2.2 per cent received $0.13; 11.1 per cent, $0.15; 13.3 per cent, $0.20; 13.3 per cent, $0.25; 11 per cent, $0.30; 15.6 per cent, from $0.35 to $0.50; and 17.9 per cent, over $0.50. Several reported an unusually long working day, especially in consideration of the extreme youth of approximately one-half of those under consideration. One plant manager stated that he began work when 9 years of age, and worked 13 hours per day, for a daily wage of ten cents.

Data collected included information showing the number of years each individual had been engaged in cotton mill work. There were 46 replies obtained. Of these one had been doing some form of mill work 9 years; five, from 10 to 14 years; six, from 15 to 19 years; 12, from 20 to 24 years; nine, from 25 to 29 years; six, from 30 to 34 years; three, from 35 to 39; three, from 40 to 44; and one, 52 years. The mean number of years of service was 25.9, and the median 24.5 years.

The periods of service were next classified separately for general superintendents or plant managers, superintendents of individual mills, and overseers. As may be expected of men occupying such positions, the four general superintendents and plant managers were found to have had a long period of

service in cotton mill work. One had had 44 years experience, another 36, a third 34, and the fourth 20 years, or an average of 33.6 years for the four. Of the superintendents of individual plants, one had been connected with cotton mills for 40 years, one 38, one 29, one 26, and one 14 years.[2] The average number of years of service was 29.4. Of the 37 overseers from whom this information was received, one had been in mill work 9 years; 10, from 10 to 20 years; 18, from 20 to 30 years; six, from 30 to 40 years; one, 44; and one, 52 years. The average period of service was 24.1 years. These figures show the long period of service usually required, especially of individuals lacking in formal and technical training, to rise from the ranks of the operative class into official positions.

EDUCATION

Statistics of education for 50 officials in the five plants studied showed that 8 per cent had never attended school, 2 per cent had received a second grade education, 6 per cent a third, 12 per cent a fourth, 12 per cent a fifth, while 22 per cent reported six grades. Of the remaining, 14 per cent had completed the seventh grade, 10 per cent had received one year of high school training, 6 per cent two years, 4 per cent three, and 2 per cent had graduated from high school. Only one of the 50 was a college graduate. This man was also the only one who had taken a business course. Two of the four general superintendents reported that they had never attended school because it was necessary for them to go to work at an extremely early age. Through home study one had acquired the equivalent of a fifth, and the other an eighth grade education. Of the two remaining, one left school when in the third and the other when in the sixth grade. Only one of the four had taken a correspondence course in textile work. Another had for a short time attended night classes which dealt with practical mill problems. Of the five superintendents of individual mills reporting as to the amount of education received, one

[2] Information on this point not obtained from one superintendent.

had never attended school, two left school when in the sixth, and two when in the seventh grades. Two of the five reported the completion of a textile course through correspondence. These two men had also attended night classes dealing with cotton mill problems. One of these was the individual who had never attended a public school. It is worth noting that not any of the nine general superintendents and superintendents of individual mills had reached high school before going to work. This is simply another illustration of what has been accomplished in southern cotton mills by men who, lacking formal education, have through self-education and home study risen to positions of responsibility.

Of the 41 foremen, one reported never having attended school, one left school when in the second grade, two in the third grade, six in the fourth, six in the fifth, eight in the sixth, and five in the seventh. Only 12 reached high school. Of these, five stopped in the eighth grade, three in the ninth, two in the tenth, and one in the eleventh. Only one graduated from college. Of the 41 foremen, nine had completed textile courses by correspondence; three had attended night classes offered in literary and textile subjects. As may be observed, the foremen had acquired a greater degree of formal education than either general superintendents or superintendents of individual mills. While three of the nine in the latter groups had never attended school, only one foreman in 40 had never been to school. Further, not any of the nine in the groups of higher officials reached high school, as compared to 12 of the 41 foremen. One of the foremen, it should be remembered, also graduated from college. The better training of the foremen is probably due to a rising standard of education. Since the foremen were younger than the superintendents, they received the benefit of improved educational facilities.

The attempt was made to ascertain the circumstances and influences to which the men interviewed attributed their success as superintendents, foremen, and plant managers. Practically every reply received referred to the determination

to rise and the ability to stay with the job as the principal factors. The chief obstacles to promotion were reported as lack of education, inability to handle men, the temptation to go into other work, and a lack of coöperation.

PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

A relatively high percentage of these men participated in local, state, and national elections. Of the 51 men studied, 82 per cent voted regularly, 10 per cent voted irregularly, and 8 per cent never voted. The majority of those not voting had formerly voted, but for various reasons had later discontinued. Sometimes the feeling of dissatisfaction with the method of conducting local elections and law enforcement was responsible for the decision to stop voting. An instance of this will illustrate the type. One overseer of a weave shop stated that he used to vote, but since "politics has become so rotten that a man's vote does not count for anything anyway, I have cut it all out." However, the individual in question was probably extremely embittered over the political situation. It is possible that the majority of those who do not vote simply neglect to do so.

Offices held by the individuals studied were of a local nature. Aside from municipal and county offices, office-holding among the foremen, superintendents, and plant managers studied did not exist. Three out of 50 reporting were then members of boards of town commissioners, five others stated that they had held similar offices, one had formerly been a town clerk, and another a deputy sheriff.

If the cases studied are typical, cotton mill supervisors are generally church members. Statistics of membership showed that 88.9 per cent were members of some church. A large proportion were also found to be either church officers or teachers in the Sunday School. Of those reporting church membership, 27.5 per cent were church officers, Sunday School teachers, or both.

A high percentage of these men were also members of some

lodge or fraternal order. Of those reporting, 64.4 per cent, or approximately two-thirds, were members of one or more lodges or fraternal orders. Twenty-one per cent of those who were lodge members held offices in the organizations concerned.

THE SUPERVISORY GROUP—GENERAL SUMMARY

Perhaps the most outstanding impression received from the study of these 51 foremen, superintendents, and plant managers is the very small amount of education each one had received. No individual had attended a textile school. Only one had graduated from college, and but two had completed high school. It should be noted further that every foreman, superintendent, and plant manager had begun his career on an unskilled job. In spite of a marked educational handicap, each one had risen to his respective position largely through his own efforts.

Of interest also is the age at which these men started to work. Approximately one-half began work under fourteen years of age. The reactionary interested in the removal of all age restrictions on work would in all probability find material for argument in a number of instances found where the men interviewed began work at seven, eight, nine, and ten years of age. However, it should be remembered that these instances represent the brighter side of the picture. They represent the group that succeeded. The story of many of their co-workers will perhaps never come to the attention of the public. The great majority will never experience the degree of success achieved by those whose careers have been studied.

In a general sense, the supervisory group associated with the cotton mill forms a very vital part of the cotton mill community. These men usually possess qualities of leadership superior to the rank and file of the people about them. These qualities have in themselves been the principal cause of their success. Possessing the qualities of leadership they become the logical and natural leaders of the community. Further than this, leadership in local community activities is generally ex-

pected of these men. To the ambitious person, desirous of promotion, enthusiastic coöperation in carrying on community activities probably offers the readiest and surest means to the desired goal. Doubtless many individuals of mediocre ability, who possessed only a few of the qualities of leadership, have been able to rise out of the ranks of the laboring class into a foreman's position simply by observing some of these essentials to promotion in the cotton mill community.

This leadership in community affairs manifests itself in a number of ways. The fact that 88.9 per cent of the supervisory group studied were church members is an indication of the interest taken by these men in the church and in religious activities. In fact one of the near essentials to promotion in the mill community is to have at least one's name on the church roll. Church membership is one of the things generally expected of men in charge of the workers. Mere membership in a church, however, does not give the foreman or the superintendent the standing that active participation in church activities does. As a consequence, the officers in the church and the teachers in the Sunday School are usually composed of men who are in a supervisory capacity in the mills.

A second activity in which the foremen and superintendents figure largely is in connection with lodges and fraternal orders. Of the 51 men in the supervisory group studied, 64.4 per cent were members of one or more lodges. These men actively support the secret order, not only because it gives them the opportunity to mingle socially, but also because they believe the secret order increases their prestige and standing in their respective positions and at the same time serves them in good stead when promotions are being considered. As a result, the secret order generally finds its strongest supporters among cotton mill foremen and superintendents.

Finally, the activity in church work and the tendency to become connected with lodges and secret orders are indicative of the type of activity that engages the interest and attention of the supervisory group during free hours. Being looked upon

as the logical leaders in the community their activity and interest are necessarily spread over the major community problems. Although untrained and of limited experience these men, it must be admitted, often exhibit a unique quality of leadership.

CHAPTER XV

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

In striking contrast to the interest of the supervisory group in community activities is the more or less indifferent attitude of the workers toward such community interests. This situation may naturally be expected. Whereas the foreman or the superintendent is the natural and logical leader in the community, the worker generally assumes the role of the subordinate in his community as well as in his industrial life. The one generally acts in the capacity of the helper, the other in the capacity of the one helped. Naturally, therefore, the cotton mill worker portrays a more passive attitude in community work than the individual in the position of the supervisor.

But even though the worker does not take as active a part in community affairs as does the supervisor, he nevertheless plays a vital part in the life of the community. The extent of his interest in community activities deserves careful consideration and study in order to determine how much he participates in these activities and his attitudes as to the value of these activities, both to himself and to the community. Hence, the purpose of the present chapter is to measure statistically, in so far as is practicable with the amount of data collected, the extent to which cotton mill workers participate in various types of community activities.

For purposes of clearness, definition of terms, and limitation of subject matter, the term community activities will here be taken to include activities of a religious, social, recreational, and civic nature. Data relating to religious activity include statistics of church membership, attendance at church and Sunday School services, and general activity in connection

with church work. Data relating to social and recreational activities participated in by cotton mill people include material showing the percentage of those who secure diversion by reading, hunting, fishing, motoring, patronizing the movies, athletic activity, and by attending social functions. Civic activity is here taken to include interest in voting and office holding.

As is apparent from the preceding explanation a further aim of the chapter, aside from that of presenting a picture of the religious, social, and civic aspects of the life of the cotton mill worker, is to show the rôle of play and recreation in the lives of these people. Even though play in some form is a necessary diversion from the regular routine of life, a proper appreciation of the social value of play ordinarily does not develop naturally within the individual. That appreciation must come through the process of learning and through experience. In view of its importance some consideration of the attitude of the cotton mill worker toward play will be given in the course of the chapter.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Of the 1,331 persons fourteen years of age and over in the 500 families studied, 944, or 70.9 per cent, were church members. A difference of 12 per cent was noticed in the statistics of church membership according to sex. Of the 650 married and single males from whom this item was secured, 65.1 per cent were church members, while of the 681 married and single females, 77.1 per cent were members of some church. Further analysis on the basis of marital condition and sex indicated that 72.2 per cent of married males and 83.9 per cent of married females were church members. Combining the two figures, it was found that 77.3 per cent of the parents in the 500 households were church members. Both unmarried males and females showed a lower percentage of membership in churches than either married males or females. Only 45.2 per cent of the single males and 64.8 per cent of the single females were church members. By combining the figures for

both sexes, it was found that 55.5 per cent of all single persons over 14 were church members. A classification of church membership according to sex and marital condition of persons in each village showed that a much higher percentage of workers were church members in some mill villages than in others. In one village only 55.1 per cent of the persons 14 or over were church members, as compared with 83.9 per cent in another village. Table XLI presents a classification by villages, sex, and marital conditions of the number and percentage of church members among the 1,331 persons from whom membership statistics were secured.

A larger proportion of the persons in home-owning families were found to be church members than persons in the group as a whole. Church members in home-owning families composed 82.8 per cent of all persons 14 years of age and over, as compared with 70.9 per cent of the entire group.

A comparison with church membership of parents in white tenant and cropper families in the Piedmont and mountain sections of the state should be of value, in view of the fact that the cotton mills have drawn largely upon the landless farmers in these two sections. A study of church membership in a Piedmont county indicated that 92.7 per cent of the parents in tenant and 53.9 per cent of the parents in cropper families were church members.[1] The same study found that in a mountain county in the state 79.3 and 76.7 per cent of the parents in the white tenant and cropper families, respectively, were church members. These figures show no significant differences in the proportion of church membership among parents of cotton mill and landless farm families in the Piedmont and mountain sections of North Carolina.

A study was also made of the denominational preference of these workers. These figures, together with separate classification of the denominational preference of the married and single persons of both sexes, are given in Table XLII.

A study of attendance at church service showed that 83.1

[1] Taylor and Zimmerman, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

Table XLI

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AMONG COTTON MILL WORKERS

(With Classification According to Villages, Sex, and Marital Condition)

	Married Males		Married Females		Single Males		Single Females		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Community I	129	63.6	159	75.0	33	35.8	61	59.9	382	62.7
Community II	67	77.9	73	83.0	6	31.6	13	68.4	159	75.0
Community III	61	83.6	72	97.3	18	62.0	26	74.3	177	83.9
Community IV	62	82.9	71	93.4	24	63.1	26	72.2	183	82.0
Community V	15	55.5	17	65.4	4	40.0	7	53.8	43	55.1
Total	334	72.2	392	83.9	85	45.2	133	64.8	944	70.9

TABLE XLII

DENOMINATIONAL PREFERENCE

(Of 1,331 North Carolina Cotton Mill Workers by Marital Condition and Sex)

DENOMINATION	NUMBER				TOTAL	
	MARRIED MALES	MARRIED FEMALES	SINGLE MALES	SINGLE FEMALES	NUMBER	PER CENT
Baptist	218	251	78	104	651	49.0
Methodist	120	133	44	57	354	26.6
Lutheran	10	12	2	4	28	2.1
Presbyterian	8	12	4	2	26	1.9
All Other Denominations	10	7	..	2	19	1.4
No Denominational Preference	93	59	63	38	253	19.0
Total	459	474	191	207	1,331	100.0

per cent of the parents and 77.2 per cent of the single persons fourteen years of age and over in the 500 families attended church. A slightly larger proportion of white landless tenant farmers were accustomed to attending church than of family heads of the cotton mill families studied. Of the parents in white tenant and cropper families in the Piedmont section of North Carolina 100.0 and 69.2 per cent, respectively, were reported to be in regular attendance at church services. Similar figures for the mountain county indicated that 94.5 and 82.0 per cent, respectively, of the parents in white tenant and cropper families went to church.[2]

Statistics of Sunday School attendance showed that 55.3 per cent of the parents and 52.0 per cent of all single persons fourteen years of age and over went to Sunday School. The percentage of parents attending Sunday School in white tenant and cropper farm families studied in the Piedmont section of North Carolina was 89.8 and 38.4 per cent, respectively; for the mountain county included in the same study, 66.2

[2] *Ibid.*

and 63.7 per cent of the parents of landless farm families reported that they attended Sunday School.[3]

A study of officers in the church and officers and teachers in the Sunday School showed that three were superintendents of Sunday Schools, 12 were Sunday School teachers, and three were church officers. Six women were members of women's societies, and 13 persons were members of church societies for young people.

SOCIAL LIFE AND RECREATION

A study of the social and recreational activities of 1,331 persons over fourteen years of age from whom information on this subject could be obtained showed that 41.8 per cent engaged in some type of recreational activity. The other 58.2 per cent reported that they did not take part in any form of recreational activity whatever. Marked differences were found in the proportion of persons participating in some form of recreation among the five mill villages in which the 500 families studied were living. In one small rural mill village only 12.7 per cent stated that they engaged in any form of recreation. The percentage would naturally be lower in this one village, since the company employed no social work director or director of playground activities. There was no community building in the village and the school house was located outside. No motion picture shows or parks had been provided. About the only opportunity for recreation was fishing in the mill pond.

The community having the largest proportion of its people participating in some form of recreational activity possessed a well-ordered industrial welfare program. A community building, equipped for various forms of entertainment and public gatherings, constituted the center of the recreational life of the village. In charge of the community building and of social and recreational activities generally was a corps of social workers. Adjoining the community building were the

[3] *Ibid.*

children's playground and swimming pool. In spite of the provision made for the people in this cotton mill village only 49.4 per cent of the persons 14 years of age and over reported that they took part in any form of social or recreational activity. Table XLIII shows that in the other villages studied, 45.7 per cent, 39.5, and 37.7 per cent, respectively, of all persons 14 years of age and over participated in recreational activity.

Not only did differences exist in the proportion of persons in the various villages who took part in the same type of recreation, but considerable variation was also found on the basis of sex. Compared to 48.8 per cent of all males only 35.0 per cent of the females took part in at least one form of social or recreational activity. For male participants the proportion ranged from only 17.3 per cent to 61.2 per cent in the two villages of the five scoring highest and lowest in this particular. Practically the same range of variation was noted for females. In one village only 7.7 per cent reported taking part in any type of recreation, as compared with 46.3 per cent in another village.

A further classification was made on the basis of the marital status of all persons studied. Little difference, however, was noted between the proportion of married and single persons who participated in some form of recreation. The percentages in this instance were, respectively, 41.1 and 43.5 per cent. While the variation was negligible on the basis of marital condition, marked differences were found in the case of married persons when both sex and marital condition were considered. Fifty-two per cent of all married males and only 30.7 per cent of married females were participants in some form of recreation. These figures tend to show that men have greater opportunity for recreation in cotton mill villages than women. Household duties, frequently coupled with large families, make it impossible for the women to secure the recreation needed, especially since some of these women, burdened with household duties and large families, are themselves wage-

Table XLIII

PERCENTAGE OF ALL PERSONS OVER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO PARTICIPATE IN SOME FORM OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY, WITH CLASSIFICATION BY VILLAGES, SEX, AND MARITAL CONDITION

	Parents			Single Persons			Totals		
	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes
Community I	65.5	34.0	49.1	52.0	37.9	44.7	61.2	35.2	45.7
Community II	45.8	22.3	33.7	16.6	57.7	38.0	39.8	30.2	34.7
Community III	32.0	37.8	32.0	37.7	58.6	47.7	34.2	46.3	39.5
Community IV	56.4	35.0	45.6	56.2	57.7	56.8	56.3	41.6	49.4
Community V	19.3	3.2	11.3	14.8	14.3	14.6	17.3	7.7	12.7
Total	52.0	30.7	41.1	42.5	44.6	43.5	48.8	35.0	41.8

earners in the mills. Where such conditions prevail, recreation for the wife and mother is out of the question. These differences, on the other hand, were not found between the relative proportion of single males and females who participated in some form of recreational activity. In fact, a slightly larger percentage of females than of males, 44.6 and 42.5 per cent, respectively, took part in one or more forms of amusement.

Relatively few persons were found who stated that they took part in as many as four types of recreation. It is significant that in the case of both married and single persons, males took part in a greater number and in more varied types of amusement than did females. Furthermore, single persons took part in recreation and amusement to a greater extent than did the married people.

Analysis of the data concerning the specific types of social and recreational activities indulged in showed that, of the 599 persons reporting some type of activity, 223, or 37.2 per cent, reported that they were accustomed to reading; 99, or 16.6 per cent, found diversion in motoring; 92, or 15.4 per cent, hunted during the season; and 77, or 12.9 per cent, found the movies a pleasant pastime. The remaining 17.9 per cent of the activities participated in covered a large number of different interests. Of these fishing, social life, and music were the most important.

Further analysis of these data on the basis of sex and marital condition showed that the most popular means of diversion for unmarried men included going to the movies, reading, hunting, and motoring, while for unmarried women reading, going to the movies, music, and sociables were, respectively, the most popular.

As may naturally be expected, the results for married persons of both sexes varied somewhat from the results for the unmarried persons of both sexes. Reading, hunting, motoring, and fishing, respectively, were the leading lines of diversion for married men, while married women preferred reading, needlework, social calls, and motoring, in the order named.

The large number of those finding diversion through reading is significant, especially when it is remembered that a considerable portion of the cotton mill population assumes an attitude of indifference toward public education. However, mere observation of the nature of this reading should explain this seeming contradiction. Cotton mill workers interested in reading usually read light fiction magazines and novels. Stories of this nature present a strong appeal to the cotton mill operative with his limited amount of education. Again the sensational type of newspaper, or the yellow journal type of publication, has a large number of readers among cotton mill people. A smaller number also read the local newspaper. Obviously, the current opinion magazine or the scientific journal, holds little of interest for the cotton mill worker. The best daily newspapers, or those newspapers which indulge least in the sensational type of news article, also have a very small number of readers among cotton mill people.

During the winter season a large number of the men have recourse to hunting as a means of diversion, while during the spring and summer, fishing is a fairly popular pastime. With an increasing number of cotton mill workers coming into the ownership of motor cars, motoring is fast becoming one of the readiest and most popular means of recreation. The fact that the married and unmarried groups of both sexes gave motoring an important place in the list of recreational activities indicates its increasing importance in affording persons more or less confined to the narrow bounds of the mill village the opportunity of traveling that would otherwise be impossible.

The social life of mill village young people is largely restricted to association within the group. Relatively little opportunity is given for participating in social activities outside mill village circles. The type of social life that is afforded the mill village youth is therefore impaired by the fact that the group tends to develop its own standards of conduct and of morals. If these standards are crude, as may happen, they

cause exclusion from other social contacts. Exclusion, in turn, perpetuates crude manners and the vicious circle continues for the cotton mill dweller.

While the motion picture theatre is very popular among the young people, relatively few parents and older persons attend. Many older people in cotton mill villages have formed a mental set against the motion picture theatre. Some of those recently come from the more isolated rural sections openly expressed their feeling that the movie was causing much of the lawlessness and crime throughout the country. In such homes the young people in the family were forbidden to patronize the local movie house.

In general, play and all forms of amusement and diversion are looked upon with indifference and suspicion by a large portion of the people in the mill villages of North Carolina. This attitude is probably a part of the social heritage of that element of people on which the southern cotton mills have drawn largely for the requisite labor to run the machinery. A close relation may be found to exist between the feeling expressed and that older religious attitude which regards any form of play or amusement as being harmful to living a good life. Where this religious attitude toward play has taken hold of the people and has become a part of their mores it is little wonder that the people in the cotton mill villages look upon the more novel and modern view of play and recreation with a considerable amount of suspicion.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Approximately one-fourth, 24.8 per cent, of the 469 male heads of households were members of one or more lodges. Members of one lodge only composed 21.1 per cent; of two lodges, 2.1 per cent; and of three or more lodges, 1.5 per cent of the total. Only 16.1 per cent of all male household heads in one village were lodge members, as compared with 33.3 per cent of those in another village. A classification of lodge membership by villages is given in Table XLIV.

Table XLIV

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERSHIP IN LODGES

(469 heads of Cotton Mill Families with Statistics for Each Mill Village Classified Separately)

Community	One Lodge	Two Lodges	Three or More	Some Lodge
I	20.0	3.5	2.5	26.0
II	17.6	..	1.2	19.9
III	22.6	..	..	22.6
IV	30.8	2.6	..	33.3
V	9.7	3.2	3.2	16.1
Total	21.1	2.1	1.5	24.8

Few men reported that they held offices in the lodges of which they were members. A large number reported having held such offices at some previous time. Orders represented, with the percentage belonging to each order, were: Woodmen 34.6 per cent, Juniors 22.0 per cent, Masons 13.2 per cent, Red Men 11.9 per cent, and Odd Fellows 6.3 per cent. The remaining 12 per cent had membership in one of the following orders: Pythians, Moose, Patriotic Sons, American Legion, and the Ku Klux Klan.

Statistics of voting were obtained from the father of the family. Of the 487 fathers of the families studied, 60 per cent reported that they voted either regularly or occasionally. A higher percentage of home-owning family heads voted than of the group as a whole. Of this group, 81.8 per cent were voters. Marked variation was noticed in the percentage of those voting in the different villages. Only 29 per cent voted in one village, as compared with 86.6 per cent in another. (Table XLV).

The larger proportion voting in some villages than in others may be explained from two points of view. In the first place, a definite relation was noticed between the rate of mobility and the percentage voting in the five villages studied. The villages having the highest rate of mobility had the lowest

proportion of voters. It is apparent that frequent moving lowers the percentage of voters, for even though the desire to vote were present, many would be disqualified on the grounds of failure to establish residence. A second explanation concerns the proportion of home-owning families living in

TABLE XLV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF HEADS OF 487 COTTON MILL FAMILIES VOTING

(With Statistics for Each Village Classified Separately)

	Number			Percentage		
Community	Voting	Not Voting	Total	Voting	Not Voting	Total
I	113	98	211	53.5	46.5	100.0
II	51	34	85	60.0	40.0	100.0
III	71	11	82	86.6	13.4	100.0
IV	48	30	78	61.5	38.5	100.0
V	9	22	31	29.0	71.0	100.0
Total	292	195	487	60.0	40.0	100.0

the respective villages. In the village in which 86.6 per cent of the family heads voted, 21.9 per cent of the families studied were home owners. There were no home owners in the village in which only 19 per cent of the family heads voted.

Office holding among cotton mill workers is practically a negligible factor. Not any of the 487 heads of families held office of any type. Two had formerly been members of town boards of aldermen.

The study showed that approximately three-fourths of the fathers and the mothers of the families were church members as compared with slightly over one-half of the unmarried workers. Also a slightly larger proportion of females than males were church members. Other than mere membership, however, these people as a group were not taking an active part in church work. Play and recreation do not form an important part of the life of the cotton mill worker as far as the data showed. Although the young people in the families

studied would naturally take a more active part in forms of amusement and recreation than older persons, such social and recreational activities participated in were of the ordinary, commonplace variety, such as going to the movies or attending sociables. Little or no opportunity seems to be offered these young people to associate with the young people of other social or industrial groups. Finally, concerning civic activity in general, about the only interest manifested by the cotton mill worker seems to be in voting at local, state and national elections. Over one-half of the fathers of the families studied reported that they voted either regularly or occasionally. It is likely that this is as high a percentage of voters as may be found in any social group and indicates that the cotton mill worker generally believes in using the ballot.

CHAPTER XVI

PERSONAL AND FAMILY DISORGANIZATION

In any community and among any social group there are at work certain forces which tend to disorganize community life. Furthermore, certain of these forces, though common to every community, may assume greater force in some communities than in others. It is sometimes claimed, for example, that the environment of the mill village is particularly favorable for the development of anti-social forces, especially among the young people. Is this supposition correct, or do the facts show that it is without foundation? A study of such disorganizing factors as juvenile delinquency, crime, insanity, feeble-mindedness, illegitimate births, deaths, poverty, and dependency among the population in cotton mill villages should therefore be of vital importance in determining the extent to which the mill village tends to develop these anti-social forces. Significant, too, is a comparison of these conditions in mill villages with those in other social and industrial groups.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

A study of the occupational distribution of the parents of 716 white delinquent boys admitted to Stonewall Jackson Training School from 1914 to 1924 showed that 22.9 per cent of these boys were from homes of textile operatives. Census figures for 1920 show that only 11.3 per cent of the gainfully employed white persons in the state in that year were textile workers. In other words, 11.3 per cent of the white occupational group furnished twice that percentage of all youthful offenders committed to the institution for delinquent boys.

A similar study of the occupations of the parents of 167

delinquent girls admitted to Samarcand Manor showed that 20.4 per cent of these girls were from homes of cotton mill operatives. Apparently the textile communities do furnish more than a proportionate share of delinquent cases of both sexes when based on comparisons made from the proportion of gainfully employed in each occupational distribution.

In Table XLVI is given a classification by occupation of the parents of boys and girls admitted to the two state institutions for delinquent youth. The percentage of the gainfully employed in each occupational group is also given. In general, as an inspection of the figures will show, manufacturing and mechanical industries furnish more than their share of the delinquents, while miners, farmers, those engaged in the professions, and clerical workers generally do not furnish a proportionate share of the offenders of either sex. On the other hand, it should be observed that the rate is higher in urban than in rural environments. This would indicate that the urban environment is more favorable to the development of delinquent traits, provided, of course, that delinquent country children come to the attention of the courts in the same proportion as do delinquent children who live in urban sections.

A study was also made of the occupational distribution of cases coming to the attention of the Juvenile Court of Gaston County, North Carolina, over a period of several years. Occupational statistics of the parents were secured in 277 such cases. Of these, 164, or 59.2 per cent, were offenses committed by young people from homes of cotton mill operatives. Further, 26 of the 277 cases studied were offenses committed by the children of carpenters and mechanics. In all probability a large proportion of these were also employed by cotton mills; in which case they lived in company houses and hence were subject to the same environment as the children of cotton mill operatives. Since the records failed to specify race, the figures given include both white and colored, but it must be remembered that practically all cotton mill workers are white. Based

Table XLVI

DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS ADMITTED TO TRAINING INSTITUTIONS BY OCCUPATIONS

(With Statistics for 716 Boys and 167 Girls)

Occupation of Father	Males	Females	
	Percentage in Each Given Occupational Group Admitted to Jackson Training School	Percentage in Each Given Occupational Group Admitted to Samarcand Manor	Percentage of Gainfully Employed in North Carolina in Each Occupational Group (Whites Only)[1]
Textile Workers	22.9	20.4	11.3
Tobacco Factory Workers	0.8	0.6	0.8
Furniture Factory Workers	1.4	2.4	0.7
All other Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries	25.1	17.4	12.8
Mines and Quarries	..	....	0.3
Transportation	5.7	....	3.8
Trade	10.2	3.0	8.0
Public Service	2.9	0.6	1.2
Domestic and Personal Service	10.8	1.2	2.1
Professional Service	1.2	0.6	4.1
Clerical Occupations	2.8	....	3.3
Agriculture, Forestry, etc.	16.2	25.7	51.6
Unclassified	..	28.1	....
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

[1] Based on *Census Reports for 1920,* IV, "Occupations," pp. 987-988.

on the average number of workers and persons per family in the five hundred families studied, the estimated white cotton mill population in Gaston County was about 54 per cent of the total white population of the county. Hence, according to these figures, the rate of delinquency among cotton mill children in this one county is somewhat higher than the rate of delinquency among the remaining white children in the county.

Several possible causes for these conditions may be advanced. Of the 33 delinquent cotton mill boys committed to Jackson Training School from Gaston County, 24, or 72.7 per cent, were themselves employed in cotton mills at the time of their delinquency. This would seem to indicate that a part of the delinquency, and a considerable part at that, is the result of conditions or associations in connection with the work. At the same time it would be unsafe to conclude that all causes of delinquency among employed cotton mill boys are to be ascribed to the conditions surrounding the work or to conditions within the mill village itself. It is possible that the absence of home training and discipline accounts for a large part of the delinquency. This would seem to be borne out by the large percentage of delinquent cases in which the mother was a wage-earner. Obviously, the mother who works from ten to eleven hours each day in the cotton mill, in addition to performing the usual round of household duties, has little if any opportunity to exercise the proper care and discipline over the children. While the twelve or thirteen-year-old girl is generally left in charge of the smaller children during the day, the boys who are not at work are left to themselves to roam the streets or to go wherever they desire.

A study of the boys' gang in the southern cotton mill village should be a rich field for research. The boys' gang composed of youths from six to fourteen is a common problem for many mill village mothers. This is especially true during school vacations. In all probability it is at the bottom of the difficulty, in so far as causes of juvenile delinquency in mill villages are environmental. It goes without saying that many of the asso-

ciations formed have an evil influence. Especially is this true where the leaders, themselves usually older than the others, come from the worst type of homes in the village. It is the belief of many that the idle months during the summer are productive of various evil influences for those boys who, not yet old enough to go into the mills, are still in that stage of development where undesirable influences probably make their greatest impression. Certainly this would be the verdict rendered by the mothers of these boys. Many asserted that they believed the child labor law should be revised so as to allow boys to work while school is not in session, adding that they would be better off generally than under present conditions. Many parents were found who opposed the child labor law for this reason.

CRIME

A study of crime based on the occupational distribution of all offenses coming to the attention of the Superior Court over a period of three years showed that 4.9 per cent of all crimes committed were by textile workers. These figures include statistics for both white and colored. The percentage of gainfully occupied textile workers, both white and colored, in the state in 1920 was 8.[2] Calculated on this basis, it is apparent that textile workers did not commit as great a number of crimes, in proportion to the number of gainfully employed, as did other occupational groups.

A reference to Table XLVII, summarizing offenses coming to the attention of the courts, according to occupational groups, will show there was marked variation in the percentage of offenses with respect to the particular nature of the crimes committed by textile workers. Specifically speaking, bigamy, prostitution, and gambling were the three offenses committed most frequently, while murder, manslaughter, and false pretense ranked lowest. In general, the tendency seems to be toward a high proportion of sex offenses and a very low

[2] Based on *Census Reports for 1920,* IV, "Occupations," pp. 987-988.

Table XLVII

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF OFFENDERS' CASES COMING TO THE ATTENTION OF SUPERIOR COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR A THREE-YEAR PERIOD 1922-1925[3]

Offense	Number Crimes	Farmers	Unskilled Labor	Textile	Skilled Labor	Commercial	Transportation	Domestic and Personal Service	All Others
		Per Cent							
All Offenders	24,742	31.0	43.2	4.9	3.8	3.8	2.3	3.1	7.9
Prohibition Violations	6,426	39.2	38.0	5.0	4.1	3.6	2.4	3.2	4.5
Larceny	3,098	20.0	58.0	6.4	2.6	1.0	2.1	3.7	6.2
Assault with Deadly Weapon	2,176	37.6	44.6	2.0	3.3	2.4	1.7	2.9	5.5
Carrying Concealed Weapons	1,345	29.6	55.7	3.3	2.7	1.7	1.1	2.0	3.9
Assault (Including Assault and Battery)	1,314	33.0	42.8	5.2	3.7	4.0	1.8	2.3	7.2
Breaking and Entering	969	11.4	64.5	8.2	1.2	1.2	2.9	2.4	8.2
Driving Car while Drunk	964	34.7	33.8	8.3	7.3	6.0	3.7	0.8	5.4
Gambling	744	9.5	47.2	14.4	0.9	9.7	0.5	3.1	14.7
Murder and Manslaughter	609	32.4	46.0	1.6	3.0	1.6	4.6	3.2	7.6
False Pretense	491	26.5	37.9	0.8	6.7	15.9	2.0	1.6	8.6
Forgery	437	14.9	52.4	4.1	5.0	3.0	3.9	3.4	13.3
Fornication and Adultery	406	25.3	43.6	5.2	2.2	1.0	1.0	7.4	14.3
Prostitution	368	14.7	30.4	12.0	2.4	3.3	2.4	10.1	24.7
Bigamy	89	13.5	50.6	15.7	3.4	2.2	1.1	4.5	9.0

[3] Adapted from an unpublished Master's Thesis on *Types of Crime in North Carolina* by Francis S. Wilder (University of North Carolina, 1926), p. 38ff.

proportion of statutory offenses,—crimes against persons and property.

The findings with respect to adult offenses are significant in that they do not bear out the results secured from a study of youthful offenders. Even though cotton mill children do commit offenses of one type or another more frequently in proportion to their number than do country children, the tendency disappears in the transition from youth to manhood. An unqualified generalization to this effect, however, would fail to take into consideration the important fact that a large proportion of the adult cotton mill population was born and reared on the farms, whereas practically all of those under fourteen were born in the cotton mill villages. The possibilities are that, in comparing juvenile delinquency and crime in this instance, we are comparing youths and adults who have spent the formative years of their lives in radically different environments. One is a product of the mill village, the other of the farm. Perhaps if a study of crime should be made a decade hence, after these youthful offenders have reached maturity, an entirely different result would be secured.

With regard to the number of gainfully employed, farmers do not commit a proportionate number of crimes. While approximately one-half[4] of the employed persons in 1920 were engaged in some form of agricultural pursuit, only 31.0 per cent of all offenses coming to the attention of the courts in the three-year period studied were committed by farmers.[5] Considering the low crime rate of farmers, and the large proportion of textile workers who were reared on the farm, there may readily be additional reasons that would not warrant any definite generalizations as to the proportion of crimes committed by textile workers. For the same reason it is also possible that crime rates of textile workers will show a de-

[4] See Table XLVI.

[5] It is probable that, because of less supervision, a larger number of offenders are never detected in rural areas than in mill villages or urban sections generally. To the extent that this situation is true, the crime rate of farmers does not show as high as it should.

cided proportional increase when sufficient time has elapsed to allow for the maturity of the present youthful offenders.

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS

The total number of births of both races reported in Gaston County, North Carolina, for the three-year period from 1922 to 1925 was 6,588. Of this number, 246, or 3.73 per cent, were illegitimate births. A study of illegitimacy by occupation, made from the 246 cases of illegitimate births reported, is given in Table XLVIII.

Table XLVIII

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS BY OCCUPATION OF THE MOTHER[6]

(246 Cases in Gaston County or Approximately 54 Per Cent of the White Textile Population)

Occupation	Percentage		
	White	Colored	Total
Textile	56.5	..	28.4
Domestic and Personal	37.9	70.5	54.1
Agriculture	0.8	18.0	9.4
Unskilled Labor	..	5.8	2.8
Student	..	0.8	0.4
No Occupation	..	4.9	2.5
Unclassified	4.8	..	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

[6] Based on birth certificates on file in the office of the Register of Deeds.

Only the occupation of the mother was given. Where paternity could be established no report of the occupation of the father was made in the absence of any legal requirement to that effect. Division on the basis of race indicated that 124 of the 246 cases were white and 122 Negro. Seventy mothers of the 124 white illegitimate children reported, or 56.5 per cent, were engaged in textile work; 37.9 per cent in domestic and personal service; 0.8 per cent in farming, while 4.8 per

cent were given no occupational classification. Estimating the cotton mill population of Gaston County at 54 per cent of the total white population of the county, it is apparent that the rate of illegitimacy among cotton mill girls and women is approximately the same as among the remaining 46 per cent of the white population of the county.

MORTALITY STATISTICS

On account of the lack of definite classification of occupations, mortality statistics of female textile operatives could not be obtained. Records were also found to be insufficient to determine the death rate of children in cotton mill families. In order to obtain accurate information concerning the death rate of textile workers in proportion to other occupational groups, it was necessary to limit the material collected to cover only employed males between the ages of 14 and 50. A study of the proportional death rate of males within these ages in Gaston County for a period of three years showed that, of the 139 white males who died in that time, 70, or 50.3 per cent, were cotton mill operatives; 11.5 per cent were farmers; 22.3 per cent were engaged in the various trades; 3.6 per cent were rated as unskilled laborers; while 12.3 per cent had no occupation. Apparently there is nothing in these figures to indicate a higher proportionate death rate among cotton mill workers than other employed groups in this county, provided that the estimate of 54 per cent of the white population as textile workers is correct.

INSANITY

Table XLIX shows the distribution, on the basis of occupation, of 1,707 white males admitted to two North Carolina hospitals for the insane from 1920 to 1925. Evidently there is no indication that textile work is favorable to the development of insanity, when it is considered that 11.3 per cent of the gainfully employed[7] furnished only 8.9 per cent of the

[7] See Table XLVI.

insane during the five-year period studied.

TABLE XLIX

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MALE INMATES ADMITTED TO NORTH CAROLINA INSANE HOSPITALS

(1920-1925)

Occupation	Percentage in Each Given Occupational Group
Textile	8.9
Tobacco Factory	0.3
Furniture Factory	0.7
All Other Manufacturing and Mechanical Occupations	11.7
Transportation	2.8
Trade	11.4
Public Service	1.8
Professional Service	3.6
Domestic and Personal Service	0.5
Clerical Occupations	2.4
Agriculture	55.9
Total	100.0

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS

Occupational statistics of the parents of 416 inmates and accepted applicants of Caswell Training School, the North Carolina institution for the feeble-minded, as shown in Table L, indicate that 7.6 per cent were from the homes of textile operatives. According to the findings, textile work does not have a larger proportion of feeble-minded persons than other occupational pursuits. Obviously, it would be unsafe to generalize, whatever the findings, with respect to probable trends concerning feeble-mindedness, since, as indicated in Chapter VIII, such a large proportion of textile workers have been engaged in their present work for a relatively short time. It is realized, too, that the statistics presented are too meager to determine absolutely whether or not the textile industry tends to attract people of low intelligence. Only a small portion of the feeble-minded in the state have the opportunity, be-

cause of the lack of facilities, of being cared for in the only institution in the state established for this purpose.

TABLE L

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF INMATES AND ACCEPTED APPLICANTS OF CASWELL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR FEEBLE-MINDED

(Statistics from 461 Cases)

OCCUPATION	PERCENTAGE IN EACH GIVEN OCCUPATIONAL GROUP
Textile	7.6
Tobacco Factory	..
Furniture ..	0.4
All Other Manufacturing and Mechanical Occupations	13.9
Transportation	1.5
Trade	12.4
Public Service	2.6
Professional Service	4.1
Domestic and Personal Service	0.7
Clerical Occupations	2.8
Agriculture	54.0
Total	100.0

Studies have recently been made that would seem to indicate a lower intelligence than may be expected in children of mill families attending public school.[8] Whatever the findings in this respect, it would seem that any generalization that low intelligence is characteristic of mill village population is open to considerable criticism in view of the short average time these families have been in the mills.[9] Regardless of any selective influence which the environment of the mill village may have on the intelligence of mill people, sufficient time has not elapsed to establish any such effect.

[8] J. H. Cook, *A Study of the Mill Schools of North Carolina* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925). Also L. H. Jobe, *Intelligence Levels of Mill Village School Children* (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of North Carolina, 1922).

[9] See chap. VIII.

POVERTY AND DEPENDENCY

An attempt was made to secure data which would show the extent of poverty and dependency among textile operatives. The available information, however, was incomplete and is given here only as an indication of the situation as it exists in two localities in the state.

A study of the occupations of 184 persons applying for aid to the Associated Charities of Charlotte, N. C., in 1925 showed that 57 per cent were textile workers; 22.9 per cent were engaged in various other manufacturing and mechanical industries; 7.0 per cent in clerical service; 5.4 per cent in domestic and personal service; 2.2 per cent in farming, public, and professional service, respectively; and 1.1 per cent in transportation occupations.

Of the 40 inmates of the Gaston County Poor Home in 1925, approximately two-thirds were reported as coming from cotton mill families. Out of the 53 white persons on the county poor list in the same county approximately 62 per cent were listed as cotton mill operatives. In both instances the mill workers furnished more than their proportion of dependents. The superintendent of the county home made the statement that a large number of inmates of the county home in this county were not there because of poverty-stricken conditions of their children, but because of the refusal of the younger people to support their parents. He gave as a reason for this statement his observation that the children of these aged inmates from the mill sections usually come to visit their parents in their own automobiles. Whether or not there is any real tendency for the young people in mill villages, any more than for the rank and file of young folks, to shift the burden of support of their parents to the counties is of course a matter of opinion.

BROKEN HOMES

A study of the marital relations of husband and wife in the 500 cotton mill families surveyed showed that in only four

families had divorce or separation of husband and wife broken up the home. On the other hand, 32 fathers and eight mothers in these families were dead. If the figures on desertion and divorce may be considered an indication, cotton mill operatives as a rule take the marriage relation seriously. However, it is to be remembered that a smaller proportion of such families would come under the scope of this study, because either a divorce or a separation quite frequently results in the complete breaking up of the home. This is especially true in cases where there are few small children.

The much larger number of families in which the male head was deceased is to be accounted for on the ground that usually the home is not broken up on the death of the father, whereas in the case of the death of the mother there is greater probability, unless the father remarries, of the home's being disbanded. This is true especially in those cases where there are no children, or where the children are themselves of sufficient age to go into the mills. A second reason for the much larger proportion of fatherless families may be found in the tendency for the mother of a tenant farm family to leave the farm and go to the cotton mill on the death of her husband in order that all the children over 14 may immediately begin contributing to the support of the family. This reason was rather frequently given as the cause for leaving the farm in cases of families in which the father was dead.

By way of summary of the principal points in the chapter it should be recalled that while the rate of juvenile delinquency was higher among cotton mill than among farm children, it was no higher among cotton mill children than among children of other manufacturing and mechanical occupations. Again, the rate was found to be higher among urban children generally than among rural children, thus indicating that the urban community is more favorable to the development of delinquent traits than is the rural community. This situation, however, was somewhat reversed with respect to crime rates of adults. Crime rates among cotton mill workers

were hardly as high as crime rates among farmers, thus indicating that the tendency of the mill village youth to crime loses a large part of its force as far as the adult offender is concerned. No correlation was found between cotton mill work and illegitimate births, deaths, insanity, or feeblemindedness.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY

The preceding chapter was concerned with the treatment of certain disorganizing forces more or less common to any community. Many of these forces are influenced and controlled by the attitudes and wishes of the persons composing the social population. In order to understand better some of these phenomena and in order to appreciate something of the point of view of southern cotton mill workers, it might be well to reconsider certain phases of the history of that element of the population from which southern cotton mills have drawn their labor supply.

THE RÔLE OF THE COTTON MILL WORKER

The social heritage of a people helps to mold the attitudes and wishes of succeeding generations. The poverty-stricken condition of the landless whites following the days of reconstruction had as its inevitable effect the assumption of a low social status. Looked upon with pity, mingled probably with a certain amount of disdain because of their well-nigh helpless situation, all pride as well as every remaining vestige of ambition swept away, they may be described as a people who appeared to have lost faith in themselves and in their power to improve. The study of the economic conditions of white landless farm families[1] would seem to indicate that living conditions of that same element of North Carolina farm population have improved little, if any, in the intervening half century.

A careful analysis of the attitudes and ideals of the cotton

[1] See Taylor and Zimmerman, *op. cit.*

mill worker reveals much that is similar in nature to that hopeless feeling of the landless white of several decades ago. It may be that a low social and economic status extending through several generations has implanted a general feeling of inferiority. Whether they are eking out a bare existence on tenant farms, or whether they have moved to the mills, the feeling of inferiority has persisted and in all probability is today vitally affecting the lives of the representatives of this portion of native southern stock.

It would be erroneous to infer, however, that all North Carolina cotton mill workers are possessed of and repressed by this feeling of inferiority. Many have recognized and have demonstrated their powers of achievement in spite of marked educational handicaps, by rising to positions of prominence after starting as illiterate doffer boys.

Frequent defense mechanisms indicating an inferiority complex were encountered in the course of the survey. One woman, the mother of a well-to-do family of home owners, remarked that "there are just as good people in the cotton mill as you will find anywhere." Similar defense reactions encountered were: "I know you people think that us cotton mill folks are just 'pore white trash,' but we are about as good as anybody else." "The cotton mill ain't going to hurt anybody," is another expression frequently heard.

This attitude of inferiority, or possibly superiority on the part of other groups toward the mill worker, which, it should be remembered, is not peculiar to the southern textile worker but is rather usual among mill workers in general in all sections, also manifests itself in social behavior. The cotton mill worker usually makes no effort toward effecting social contacts with members of other occupational groups, but rather assumes an attitude of aloofness and indifference. Where social contacts are formed, other groups are found to have taken the initiative. Sometimes, when the advances are made by those supposed to be in a higher social position, no associations develop. In one cotton mill

town no woman from a cotton mill family had been a member of the woman's club in the ten years of its organization. This club was of a social-civic nature. Its members were interested in community development. Regardless of the nature of the organization, no representative of a cotton mill family had joined the association. As far as could be learned, no discrimination as to membership existed. In fact, it is definitely known that invitation to membership was open to all women in the town.

Young women and girls earning a livelihood by working in the mills also manifest the same attitude toward others of their age and sex in different social situations. The cotton mill girl refers to others of her sex in a higher social position as being "stuck up"—a term in frequent usage among cotton mill people but still possible among country folk in general. It is apparent that where this situation exists social contacts with other groups are impracticable.

On the other hand, in the play groups found in school, mill children apparently did not show the same inferior attitude so noticeable in adult cotton mill workers. Nor was any discrimination practiced here by other groups. Mill children, the children of farmers, of merchants, and of trades people generally met on a plane of social equality.

In some places in the state, class lines are probably more sharply drawn than in others. In the areas of greatest textile development the mills have tended to draw their labor from peoples of different social strata. Frequently in these sections there is little or no discrimination between cotton mill families and other industrial or commercial groups. Such discrimination as exists, as pointed out already, is more in the minds and in the actions of the cotton mill operatives themselves than on the part of other social groups. Cotton mill workers of home-owning families in at least one cotton mill town in the state enjoy a social rating equivalent to families of carpenters, mechanics, and trades people generally.

In those sections having few cotton mills, where there is

little industrial development of any type, it is probable that a much greater degree of social discrimination is practiced. This situation is conceivable if it be remembered that the mills have tended to attract the lower strata of the native white population first and, as the industry expands, to draw on the successively higher social types. In one small city in the state located outside the area of greatest industrial development, but having within its corporate limits two cotton mills, class lines were found to be very sharply drawn. Anyone working in these mills was considered inferior. It was reported that no social contacts whatever existed between the "well to do" and the "cotton mill trash." Any young man seen in the company of a girl "from the mill hill" was branded as being no better than his associate and was thus debarred from further association with the so-called better class of girls.

Obviously the manifestation of a superior attitude, and the refusal of townspeople generally to regard the cotton mill operative as a social equal tends to foster in the mind of the cotton mill worker the feeling that he is an inferior being. This sense of inferiority is directly transmitted as a kind of social heritage from generation to generation. It is also renewed in the daily round of social contacts within and without the group.

A third factor probably making for the presence of inferiority feeling among textile operatives is concerned with the conception of the work and the social rating of the worker by even the poorest elements of native white farm population. The feeling that the farmer, whatever his economic status, enjoys a higher social rating usually causes the members of the tenant farm family who move to the cotton mill to feel that they have lowered their social position. Frequently illustrations of this may be gained in conversation with members of any household fresh from the farm. In such cases also it frequently happens that social contacts are severed on every hand. The family moving to the mills from the tenant farm inevitably, in case of long distances

especially, loses all contact with the little country neighborhood. Feeling a certain unwillingness to become identified with cotton mill workers, the members of such a family may not readily form new acquaintances or look with favor on the development of such secondary relations as are practicable. Isolation results first in the wilful, self-imposed isolation, brought on by the desire of the individual himself. Later if the family remains in the same mill village, enforced isolation results from the observation by others of the individual's acceptance of the status quo as to the social relations prevailing in the village. The full effects or the final consequnces of the situation described may be only partly surmised. Manifestly, if an acute state of maladjustment develops, dissatisfaction and unrest result.

The feeling that nobody cares, resulting from a situation of isolation, destroys the pride of the individual and saps initiative and creative endeavor. Instead of the new environment's helping to build a new life organization with the old sense of inferiority pushed further in the background, the tendency is toward increasing disorganization with the feeling of inferiority brought into even greater prominence.

The humanitarian motive associated with the revival of the cotton industry in the South,—the feeling that the cotton mill was built in order to provide a class of unfortunate whites with a means of earning a livelihood,—is an unhappy chapter in the history of southern textile manufacturing for this point of view has tended to stamp the industry and its workers with a certain social rating, which resists all effort to establish a different social status for those who must find employment in the mills.

Repeated statements were made by mothers of cotton mill families to the effect that the environment of the mill village was unfavorable to the development of correct habits in children. A mother of two unruly youths remarked to the writer in the course of an interview: "Look at them boys. Before we come to the cotton mill I could manage them but I can't now.

The cotton mill is no place to raise children." When asked if she were contented to live in the mill village, she replied: "If the good Lord spares my life for two more months, I aim to leave the cotton mill and never come back. I am going back to Cherokee County where I used to live and where I can raise my children like they ought to be." This view was shared by a large proportion of mothers having the responsibility of rearing children. The attitude was naturally manifested more frequently by mothers of those families that had recently moved from the rural sections. Apparently personal disorganization and other forms of maladjustment had influenced this mother in reaching the conclusion that the cotton mill village was the only factor in her inability to control her children. Nothing good in connection with the mill village could be found by individuals obsessed with the idea that every force in the present environment was against the proper development of personality.

THE RÔLE OF PLAY AND RECREATION

Older persons whose formative years had been spent in a rural environment were found to be almost universally opposed to the more modern forms of recreation. The swimming pool, in the estimation of the older family heads, possesses practically unlimited possibilities for evil. The same conception is held in regard to the dance hall. Card playing is also usually under the ban. The motion picture theatre is another institution that receives a considerable amount of censure from the parents, while the young people regard it as a very popular means of amusement. Elderly persons having recently moved from the mountains and other remote sections regard the motion picture house with open suspicion, and some attempt to prevent their children from patronizing the local movie house.

The general opinion still prevails that, when an individual has performed a hard day's work, rest is all that is needed for a complete life. For this reason the efforts of the social

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worker in providing forms of entertainment are considered, especially by the older persons, as being of little value. As a rule the cotton mill worker shows little appreciation for this form of industrial welfare work.

The church and religion have a strong influence on the cotton mill worker. The sects and denominations offering the highest emotional appeal are the most popular. The revival can always find a fruitful field in any southern cotton mill village. It is probable that the church exercises considerable influence on the attitude held toward social and recreational activities. This is apparently true in the case of those forms of amusement to which the church is still opposed.

The church is also largely responsible for the attitude still maintained that goodness and sadness are synonymous, while pleasure of any type may be regarded with suspicion. This older conception of the function of religion has undoubtedly exercised considerable influence on these people since most of them were reared in a highly conservative environment. Considering the influence which the church exercises on the rank and file of cotton mill people, the recent activities of pastors of mill churches in organizing and otherwise lending their assistance to such groups as boy scouts and camp fire girls may help to overcome this antagonistic attitude toward play and recreation. In enlisting the services of the ministers, along with their efforts to put into practice a system of industrial welfare work, it would seem that the mills are entering on a movement designed to change the outgrown conception of play and recreation which is still held by many.

ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION

The southern cotton manufacturer has been the object of considerable criticism because of certain alleged practices in connection with the operation of the public schools located in mill communities. The criticism has been made that the cotton manufacturer is opposed to educating the boys and girls living in his village for fear they will be lost to the mill. This

charge is made especially in connection with the high school.

While it is probably true that some manufacturers are opposed to high school education for the mill children, the principal difficulty, it must be admitted, rests in the attitude of the parents and children themselves. The studies presented in the chapter on education show the tendency for these children to drop out of school and go to work as soon as the law permits. The decreasing proportion of the enrollment of each higher grade composed of mill children is only added evidence of this general tendency. Actual experience and contact with mill operatives and their children point to a general feeling of indifference toward education. This indifferent attitude is but another outward expression of the inferiority referred to. Where this feeling prevails we may expect to find opposition to school attendance laws.

The opinion of superintendents of public welfare and school officials intrusted with the enforcement of the school attendance laws points to the same conclusion, that there is a large element of the cotton mill population of North Carolina, composed of the drifters especially, that is too willing to evade the responsibility of educating their children. This attitude is manifested in various ways: in the attempt to evade the attendance officer, in the tendency to move and thereby escape the school census lister, in open refusal to send the children to school, and in poor or irregular attendance. Investigation of the problem cases in attendance, in one school composed largely of mill children, showed that practically all were from mill families. It was found that even threatened prosecution often failed to accomplish the results desired. Efforts were frequently made not to have the children listed in the school census. One favorite device employed by certain irresponsible families was to move to another village just before or immediately after the census was taken. Often the remark was made that since "we are going to move in a few days it's no use to bother with us." The facts show that just such families were the ones that were constantly making

trouble for the attendance officer. Realizing they were safe from the law as long as the names and ages of the children could be withheld, the family would sometimes move to another mill village and thereby be able to keep the children out of school for varying lengths of time.

The tendency for many parents to keep their children out of school possibly arises from a deeply imbedded feeling that any expense and sacrifice involved in education would be of little or no benefit to the children. In an effort to ascertain attitudes toward education generally and toward high school and college education especially, interesting and enlightening views were encountered. Usually the replies received to direct questions were so vague as to be of little value. Some would reply that "I want my children to get as much larnin' as they can." However, just how much such a statement implies is a matter of conjecture. One thing is evident in such a reply, namely, that the parent involved usually felt little or no obligation to educate his children. The reply connotes a general attitude of indifference. If the children possess the desire to go to school longer than the law actually requires, or if the mother is especially desirous of keeping the children in school, they have a much better chance of receiving a few extra grades of formal education than cotton mill children taken as a whole. A reply commonly received in answer to questions put to determine the attitude on education was that "I don't see much good from trying to educate my children when about all they will ever be able to do is to work in the cotton mill anyway." Apparently, at the bottom of such a reply is a feeling or an attitude of utter hopelessness of ever improving the social or economic status in life.

Some of the fathers and mothers interviewed were able to show either by actual accomplishments or by undoubted sincerity, that they were doing all they could to educate their children. Many of these parents were themselves illiterate, but, because of the handicap thus experienced, had an evident desire to educate the children in order that they might not

have the same difficulties in life. This group constitutes the element that has supplied the mills with the most efficient labor. Also from the ranks of this group have come many of the second-hands, overseers, superintendents, and even presidents of mills.

At the other extreme, and composed principally of the floating element, is the group marked for their opposition to education. Frank statements in opposition to education were made by the heads of some of the families studied. Perhaps the most outstanding example of this attitude was the case of the head of an illiterate family referred to in a former chapter. The individual in question felt that "education made people mean." One youth seventeen years of age who had just completed the seventh grade, stated that "they wouldn't let me go on to high school." The question was then asked if "they" were the mill officials. The reply received was that the mill authorities did not care but that his father had forbidden him to continue in school with the threat of banishing him from home in case he should persist. The financial condition of this particular family was apparently favorable. The father was a loom fixer earning $37 per week and the family was small, consisting of only four persons. Explanation given by the young man as to his father's opposition to his going to high school showed that the man himself had gone only as far as the fifth grade and, since he had "made good," he felt that his son should be able to do the same with two extra years of formal education to his credit.

ATTITUDE TOWARD CHILD LABOR

Opposition to the child labor law was encountered rather frequently in the course of the study. Some were opposed to the principle of restricting the work of children. Apparently these were identical with the cases of opposition to the school attendance law. Attitudes toward the child labor law were obtained from 481 of the 500 household heads. Of these, 62.5 per cent were favorably disposed toward the law, 22.5 per

cent were opposed, while 15 per cent were indifferent. It is obvious that any attempt to give a statistical measurement of an opinion is subject to error. Frequent contradictory statements were made during interviews by individuals endeavoring to explain their attitude toward child labor legislation. A number registered opposition of a milder sort. Usually this opposition involved modifying the law so as to provide children with work during the summer months and at such other times when school was not in session.

Apparently little concern was felt over the welfare of the child who enters the cotton mill at an early age. Only in rare instances was a person found who believed that the legal working age should be raised. Fourteen was satisfactory for practically every one as far as the upper age limit was concerned. Mothers frequently stated that their children, especially boys from 12 to 14, would "be better off at work in the mill than running loose over the streets like they are now." Nowhere did the idea of exploitation of youth manifest itself. Rather, the prevailing opinion among the workers was that the manufacturer who took in the boy or girl was conferring a favor on the youthful worker and his family.

ATTITUDE TOWARD TRADE UNIONISM

One of the marked characteristics of the southern cotton mill worker is his outstanding individualism. Coming originally from the farm, he has not yet had the individualism of the farmer effaced. Many are still rural-minded in sentiments, in attitudes, and in wishes. Although the labor unrest of 1929 would seem to indicate a changed attitude no definite conclusions can yet be drawn. However, several factors which tend to keep down the growth of union sentiment might well be reviewed here. The close relationship existing between official and worker tends to keep down the growth of the feeling that arises out of impersonal, secondary contacts. Owing to the relatively small size of many mills and the small number of employees per mill, the superintendent, the plant man-

ager, and in some cases even the president are able to call every employee by his first name. Further, the president also frequently has an intimate acquaintance with the home conditions of the "help." The sickness of a child or the birth of a child is usually known to the "boss." In brief, the human factor is still an important influence in the relation of the employer to the employee in the southern mill.

Closely interwoven with these primary relations is the influence the manufacturer is able to exert through industrial welfare work. When the size of the small mill is increased to the point where it numbers its employees by the hundreds; when the plant develops to the point where the manufacturer is on the verge of losing the personal touch, the institution of a program of welfare activities under the direction of an individual trained in the technique of industrial welfare work has frequently supplied an additional human touch to the situation which has made the worker feel that the employer still has a personal interest in him. It is probable that the widespread adoption of various industrial welfare features has accomplished more toward keeping down the trade union sentiment in southern cotton mill communities than any other one factor. Certainly the adoption of industrial welfare work and the individualistic traits of the worker have been the two forces operating to keep the trade union movement in the South in such an inactive state that until recently it scarcely existed. A recent survey of the field indicates the rather spasmodic and futile attempts that have been made to organize the southern territory during the past several decades.[2]

In the course of the survey of the 500 North Carolina cotton mill families, an effort was made to obtain attitudes toward trade unionism. The same difficulty was encountered in this instance as in the attempt to determine statistically the attitude toward the child labor law. Of the 463 family heads from whom an attitude toward unionism could be obtained,

[2] George S. Mitchell, *Textile Unionism in the South* (Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1926).

43 per cent were favorable to the unions, 27.1 per cent opposed, and 29.9 per cent were unconcerned and generally indifferent toward the whole subject.[3]

A large proportion of those favoring trade unionism were careful to make certain reservations in giving their opinion. Some reported that the trade union was "a good thing" in principle but were inclined to oppose organization by outside agencies. A probable explanation of this attitude is to be found in an experience many had passed through during the attempts to organize the southern territory shortly after the close of the World War which had an aftermath in the strikes of 1920. Organization was effected through representatives from other sections of the country. Strikes in several sections of the state, called over a proposed wage restriction, resulted in a distinct victory for the manufacturer. In Charlotte a prolonged strike finally ended by the workers' taking over their old jobs at the wage reduction first announced. Those involved in the strike, as well as others in the immediate section, felt that the union officials had not abided by the contract when provisions were no longer forthcoming. Naturally the unions ceased to exist. Further, since the manufacturers agreed to reinstate practically everyone, whether active in the strike or not, at the wage reduction first announced, there developed a fairly general feeling that, after all, the owners of the mills were more friendly to the workers than the northern organizers. Wild rumors were afloat. Some even went so far as to claim that the organizers were the paid representatives of northern manufacturing interests sent to the South for the express purpose of creating trouble and crippling the southern textile industry. Although public charges made in this connection were later retracted, it is probable that such opinions were shared rather widely both by the workers and the manufacturers. Naturally, the manufacturer found it to his advantage to make stock of such a rumor. The result was the creation of a widespread feeling of suspicion in the minds of the workers

[3] This material was collected previous to the strike situation of 1929.

against any further attempts to organize by outside interests.

In justice to all concerned, it should be added that there were certain factors, other than those laid at the door of the organizer, making for the dismemberment of the unions in question. The failure to pay dues promptly, the manifestation of the individualistic temperament, or the desire to act individually rather than in unison made almost inevitable the failure of the union.

DEVELOPMENT OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

It is the opinion of a number of cotton mill officials of whom inquiry was made that, as a rule, the recruit fresh from the tenant farm has a greater general feeling of responsibility than has the individual who has been in the work for a period of years.

Owners of grocery establishments and retail merchants generally, dependent on cotton mill people for their trade, frequently stated that the utmost care and caution had to be exercised in the extension of credit to cotton mill families. In one cotton mill town, with which the writer has an intimate acquaintance, practically every merchandise establishment that had been organized for a number of years had been forced into bankruptcy chiefly because of uncollectible debts created by cotton mill families. The usual custom prevailing in cotton mill communities where credit can be secured is to have the local groceryman advance credit on the weekly basis. For various reasons, families tend to get behind in the payment of these weekly obligations. The groceryman, on the other hand, is hardly in a position to stop the extension of credit for fear he may lose the original debt. Further credit is extended. The process keeps up, with the result that large debts are contracted. Families in such position frequently slip quietly out of the village, sometimes even at night, and go to another village where they attempt the same tactics. Having no redress, the merchant generally must lose the entire amount.

Interviews with a number of retail merchants doing busi-

ness in cotton mill towns and villages bear out the preceding statement. Some merchants refuse credit. Others "take an order on the time" of any family desiring credit. By this process the merchant goes to the mill office on pay day and there is paid the amount of credit extended to the family. The tendency to evade the payment of store debts is especially marked among the group of families referred to a number of times before as the floating element. However, it is manifestly an injustice to the family that feels and pays its obligations to infer that all North Carolina cotton mill families are guilty of this practice. The thrifty family, the family that enjoys a certain amount of social prestige in the community, is probably just as responsible in the payment of debts and all obligations as is any family dependent on any type of work for a livelihood.

It is also probable that welfare work tends to promote this sense of irresponsibility. Having little natural desire to save and knowing that in case of sickness or other handicap they will be taken care of by the mill anyway, the family with little sense of responsibility finally comes to evade other obligations. That the paternalistic attitude of employers robs the workers of the incentive to save is the opinion of Mr. R. W. Edmonds, who says:

> But they are as a class thriftless and shortsighted and they have little incentive to save. Thrifty, foresighted farmers buy their farms; the mill workers are recruited largely from the failures from among the thriftless tenant class. Furthermore, the paternalistic attitude of the mill, while it has certain advantages, robs them of incentive to save. They cannot afford to own homes; taxes and upkeep would amount to more than their rent. If they get sick and have money in the bank, they have to spend it, but, if they have already spent their money for pleasures, they are cared for by the mill, so from their point of view, they might as well spend it as they get it. Again, they are unaccustomed to handling much money and their wages offer opportunities for luxuries long desired in vain. The large number of garages provided by many of the mills for cars owned by their employees indicates the direction in which much of their money goes. One mill president told me of a couple in his mill, both weavers, who had recently paid $4,200 cash for a new Lincoln.[4]

[4] R. W. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

Not all who purchase automobiles buy Lincolns. In fact the great majority of owners possess one of the cheaper cars. A surprisingly large number are, however, coming into the car ownership class. Though it can hardly be classified on any other basis than as a luxury as far as actual need is concerned, unless it be in connection with finding work more easily, the automobile enables the family to escape from the narrow confines of the cotton mill village at the close of the work day or on week-ends to an extent not possible for the family not owning such means of transportation. Though undoubtedly a heavy expense in proportion to the total family wages, the automobile owned by a cotton mill family is certainly an important factor in social adjustment.

Apparently with the various channels through which the wages of the cotton mill family are expended, there is little opportunity left for saving. Where sickness or any other unforeseen expense overtakes the family the result is a general failure to meet every obligation. The temptation, therefore, to evade payment of a debt long contracted, by the simple process of moving on, may be particularly tempting to those individuals not possessed with a strong sense of duty in meeting such obligations.

THE COTTON MILL PROBLEM

In the final analysis, with the probable exception of business cycles and marketing, the greatest problem confronting the cotton manufacturing industry in North Carolina and the whole South is the problem of its people. The mills have drawn principally upon the lowest social strata of the white population for their labor force. As a result, a vast converging of undesirable elements has probably taken place. Where formerly the poorer and more ignorant of the tenant farm element was diffused and scattered among a generous sprinkling of well-to-do families, that element has been brought together in the mill village in such a way that little diffusion of outside culture can take place. Although a fair proportion of such families have improved their condition in

life, vast numbers have done little or nothing. Some have even added, to existing undesirable traits, others equally undesirable. Moreover, the peculiar composition of the southern mill village facilitates the development of such undesirable traits, since segregation in varying degrees is inevitable. The natural aversion of the worker toward effecting social relations with other groups, coupled with the nature of the mill village itself, seems to challenge the best efforts of social workers and others interested in the future of the textile population in the South.

In a sense the situation is ideally suited to the development of a social type. As to the nature and composition of the mill village itself little else can be said than that it is an institution which sets apart rather definitely a portion of the population. Since little opportunity is presented for the forming of social contacts outside of the mill village, a certain amount of isolation from other groups is unavoidable. These factors tend toward the development of a social type.

However, an impartial analysis of the situation will reveal certain factors tending in the opposite direction. Not all southern cotton mill workers live in mill villages. As will be recalled from a preceding chapter, possibly not over 70 per cent of the workers are housed in company dwellings.[5] The remaining 30 per cent live outside of mill villages. A large proportion of these are home owners, some of whom enjoy a social rating on a par with other industrial and commercial peoples. The trend, in so far as this element is concerned, is obviously away from the development of a social type.

A second favorable factor concerns the constant additions that are being made to the labor supply. The mills are still drawing upon the tenant farmer element in securing the needed additions to the labor force. As pointed out, the results of the survey showed that over one-half of the heads of households in the 500 families were reared on farms. This situation allows for the constant influx of new blood and for the in-

[5] See chap. XII.

fusion of new ideas. Added to the above is the tendency on the part of a considerable number to pass back and forth between the farm and the mill village. While it is conceivable that the time may eventually come when the mills will no longer draw on this reserve, as long as the process is maintained the chances are against the development of a social type.

A third factor making for the development of personality in the mill village involves certain policies that have been adopted by some mills. A sanely administered program of industrial welfare work, although at best containing unfavorable elements, can be of assistance in raising living standards by the simple process of education. Some mills are attempting to build a better citizenship by this means; others, through their personnel departments, are endeavoring to select their workers by employing only those with good records.

While some mills are making progress in the directions indicated, others are doing nothing. It is to the latter villages that there is a steady and constantly increasing flow of the most undesirable elements. If the present trend is maintained for some years to come it is fairly safe to infer that individual mills and mill villages will come to have a social rating depending upon the class or type of worker each attracts. Some mills now have an excessive proportion of drifting families. Others have secured, through the process of selection, a fairly stable and very efficient labor force. To what lengths this tendency may lead, if unchecked, remains yet to be seen. It is fairly evident, with the growth of group consciousness and class distinction in general between different elements within the cotton mill population, that there is taking place a development away from a social type on the one hand and toward such a type on the other.

Unless an outside force interferes, it is fairly safe to conclude that there is an element of cotton mill population in the state that is not destined to make progress along any line. The desire to improve is lacking. An analysis of the statistics

collected in the house-to-house survey indicated that those families having an unusually high mobility rate were uniformly the most unprogressive. Lacking in educational incentive, in thrift, in the desire for home ownership, and in a strict sense of responsibility in general; unconcerned as to social and civic activities; indifferent toward forms of industrial welfare work invoked especially for their benefit, the drifting families present the most difficult problem as far as the improvement of standards in the mill village is concerned.

Viewing the present situation from every angle it seems safe to infer, however, that, in spite of all the shiftlessness and lack of ambition on the part of some, the great bulk of the cotton mill population of the state and of the South generally has undergone in recent years marked improvement in all phases of life. Those who are lacking in the incentive to improve of their own accord have been benefited by the pressure of public opinion, by the enforcement of the school attendance law and the child labor laws, and in some instances by sanely administered systems of industrial welfare work. In consideration of the influence exerted toward the development of personality by the forces enumerated, and especially since the child has been the center of interest in the various attempts at improvement, it is probable that the coming generations of North Carolina cotton mill workers may improve their present status to the extent that they will have a social rating equivalent to other industrial peoples.

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